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Datum 27° die Aprilis, A.D. 1870.

REMOTE STORAGE

Wit & Humour

POEMS

By the

AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

LONDON
JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, PICCADILLY, W.
1867
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LONDON:
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introduction, by J. C. Hotten	v
The Ballad of the Oysterman	33
To an Insect	36
The Dilemma	39
Daily Trials	42
To the Portrait of "a Lady"	45
Reflections of a Proud Pedestrian	47
The Dorchester Giant	49
The Music-Grinders	52
The September Gale	56
The Toadstool	59
The Spectre Pig	61
The Treadmill Song	67
My Aunt	69
Lines recited at the Berkshire Festival	72
Verses for After-Dinner	75
A Song for the Centennial Celebration of Harvard College, 1836	79
Evening	82
Nux Postcœnatica	85
The Stethoscope Song	91
On lending a Punch-Bowl	96
The Height of the Ridiculous	101

20 Ap 49 - Spec. Coll. Div. 13 Jan 50 Potter

PAGE

Latter-Day Warnings 103
Prologue 105
The Deacon's Masterpiece; or, The Wonderful "One-Hoss Shay" 109
The Old Man of the Sea 115
Ode for a Social Meeting 118
Parson Turell's Legacy; or, The President's Old Arm-Chair 119
Contentment 126
De Sauty 130
Æstivation 134
The Old Man dreams 135
What we all think 138
The Comet 141
The Last Blossom 145
"The Boys" 148
A Sea Dialogue 151
The Jubilee 154
The Sweet Little Man 156
Our Oldest Friend 160
A Farewell to Agassiz 163
The Last Leaf 167
The Mysterious Visitor 170
Lines by a Clerk 175
To the Portrait of "a Gentleman" 177
The Hot Season 180
A Modest Request 183

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little volume of humorous verses, by the author of the delightful *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, may be very appropriately introduced by a few biographical particulars.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES was born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1809. He was educated at Phillips' Academy, Exeter, and graduated at Harvard in 1829. In the following year the students of that university started the *Collegian*, a magazine possessing many of the peculiarities, but scarcely the talent, of our *Etonian* and *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*. Amongst its best papers were those from the pen of Holmes, who may be said to have been the Praed of the occasion. He contributed, amongst other humorous pieces, "Evening, by a Tailor," and "The Spectre Pig," both of which are given in the following pages. After six numbers of the magazine had appeared it experienced the fate common to all school journals, and came to a standstill.

What the military profession is to young men of position here, the law seems to be in America. It affords gentlemanly occupation — lessons in worldly education—until the final course or position has been decided upon. Holmes spent a year in a lawyer's office, but the profession was not congenial to his taste, and he fell, we are told, under the poet's censure, of "penning stanzas when he should engross." What led him finally to choose medicine as his profession we are not informed. His earliest studies in this new path, we are assured, were prosecuted with great energy, and so anxious was the student for success in his new profession that literary composition was for a time forgotten. In 1833, however, a little volume appeared,* for the benefit of a charitable institution; and as this contains several pieces by him, we may conclude that, the first excitement of his new duties past, the old literary taste again creeped forth. The poems in this tiny book do not bear the names of their authors, but Holmes's contributions may easily be discovered.

In the same year the medical student came to Europe for the purpose of pursuing his studies at Paris. He remained here nearly three years, residing mostly

* *The Harbinger; a May Gift:* dedicated to the Ladies who have so kindly aided the New England Institution for the Education of the Blind. Boston: 1833; 12mo, pp. 96.

in the French capital. In 1836 he returned home to take his medical degree at Cambridge. It was on this occasion that he delivered "Poetry, a Metrical Essay," before the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, which he published the same year, in the first acknowledged volume of his poems.* In "Poetry" he describes four stages of the art,—the pastoral, martial, epic, and dramatic; successfully illustrating the two former by his lines on "The Cambridge Churchyard" and "Old Ironsides," which last became a national lyric, having first been printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, when the frigate "Constitution" lay at the Navy Yard in Charlestown, and the department had resolved upon breaking her up,—a fate from which she was preserved by the verses, which ran through the newspapers with universal applause, and were circulated in the city of Washington in handbills.

The same volume also contained "The Last Leaf" and "My Aunt," which established Holmes's reputation for humorous quaintness. Society was more staid then than now, and the author in his preface felt called upon to offer somewhat of an apology, in the shape of a vindication of the extravagant in literature. He says, —"As material objects in different lights repeat themselves in shadows variously elongated, contracted, or

* *Poems*, by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Boston: 1836; 12mo, pp. 163.

exaggerated, so our solid and sober thoughts caricature themselves in fantastic shapes, inseparable from their originals, and having a unity in their extravagance, which proves them to have retained their proportions in certain respects, however differing in outline from their prototypes."

In 1838 Dr. Holmes became Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Dartmouth. On his marriage, in 1840, he established himself in Boston, where he acquired the position of a fashionable and successful practitioner of medicine. In 1847 he was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Medical School connected with his own college at Harvard.

Dr. Holmes is celebrated for his *vers d'occasion*, cleverly introduced with impromptu graces at medical feasts, college festivals, and other social gatherings; which are pretty sure to have some fanciful descriptions of nature, and laugh loudly at the quackeries, both the properly professional, and the literary and social, of the day. His "Terpsichore" was delivered on one of these occasions, in 1843. The "Stethoscope Song" was such an effusion, his "Modest Request" another.

It was on the occasion of receiving a copy of "Astræa"—one of Holmes's most popular poems—that Miss Mitford made some pleasant remarks concerning our author in her *Recollections of a Literary Life:*

"I hardly know," she says, "any one so original as Dr. Holmes. For him we can find no living prototype; to track his footsteps, we must travel back as far as Pope or Dryden; and, to my mind, it would be well if some of our own bards would take the same journey, provided always it produced the same result. Lofty, poignant, graceful, grand, high of thought, and clear of word, we could fancy ourselves reading some pungent page of *Absalom and Achitophel*, or of the *Moral Epistles*, if it were not for the pervading nationality, which, excepting Whittier, American poets have generally wanted, and for that true reflection of the manners and follies of the age, without which satire would fail alike of its purpose and its name.

"The work of which I am about to offer a sample—all too brief itself—is a little book of less than forty pages, described in the title-page as 'Astræa, a poem delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale College, August 1850, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, and printed at the request of the Society.'

"The introduction tells most gracefully in verse that rather, perhaps, implies than relates the cause of the author's visit to the college, dear to him as the place of his father's education:

> 'What secret charm, long whispering in mine ear,
> Allures, attracts, compels, and chains me here,

Where murmuring echoes call me to resign
Their sacred haunts to sweeter lips than mine;
Where silent pathways pierce the solemn shade,
In whose still depths my feet have never strayed;
Here, in the home where grateful children meet,
And I, half alien, take the stranger's seat,
Doubting, yet hoping, that the gift I bear
May keep its bloom in this unwonted air?
Hush, idle fancy, with thy needless art;
Speak from thy fountains, O my throbbing heart!
Say, shall I trust these trembling lips to tell
The fireside tale that memory knows so well?
How, in the days of Freedom's dread campaign,
A home-bred schoolboy left his village plain,
Slow faring southward, till his wearied feet
Pressed the worn threshold of this fair retreat;
How, with his comely face and gracious mien,
He joined the concourse of the classic green;
Nameless, unfriended, yet by nature blest
With the rich tokens that she loves the best;
The flowing locks, his youth's redundant crown,
Smoothed o'er a brow unfurrowed by a frown;
The untaught smile, that speaks so passing plain
A world all hope, a past without a stain;
The clear-hued cheek, whose burning current glows,
Crimson in action, carmine in repose;—
Gifts such as purchase, with unminted gold,
Smiles from the young and blessings from the old.'"

Other passages are selected by Miss Mitford, amongst them one portraying the schoolboy,—a delightful piece

of word-painting; then follows a description of an American spring, "equally true to general nature and to the locality where it is written." After this we are introduced to a winter room, delineated with equal taste and fidelity,—the very home of lettered comfort:

"Yet in the darksome crypt I left so late,
Whose only altar is its rusted grate,—
Sepulchral, rayless, joyless as it seems,
Shamed by the glare of May's refulgent beams,—
While the dim seasons dragged their shrouded train,
Its paler splendours were not quite in vain.
From these dull bars the cheerful firelight's glow
Streamed through the casement o'er the spectral snow;
Here,—while the night-wind wreaked its frantic will
On the loose ocean and the rock-bound hill,
Rent the cracked topsail from its quivering yard,
And rived the oak a thousand storms had scarred,—
Fenced by these walls, the peaceful taper shone,
Nor felt a breath to swerve its trembling cone.
Not all unblest the mild interior scene,
When the red curtain spread its folded screen;
O'er some light task the lonely hours were past,
And the long evening only flew too fast:
Or the wide chair its leathern arms would lend
In genial welcome to some easy friend,
Stretched on its bosom, with relaxing nerves,
Slow moulding, plastic to its hollow curves,—
Perchance indulging, if of generous creed,
In brave Sir Walter's dream-compelling weed.

Or, happier still, the evening hour would bring
To the round table its expected ring;
And while the punch-bowl's sounding depths were stirred,
Its silver cherubs smiling as they heard,
O'er caution's head the blinding hood was flung,
And friendship loosed the jesses of the tongue."

Then follows an enumeration, not merely of books, but of printers, which "I confess," remarks Miss Mitford, "took me a little by surprise. I knew that wide readers were widely spread in the United States; and that there was no lack either of ripe scholars or of extensive libraries. I should have fully expected to find such a man as Dr. Holmes among the buyers of the best works, ancient and modern, but hardly amongst the collectors of choice editions. That, I confess, did give me a very pleasant astonishment. Woman although I be, I have lived enough with such people to hold them in no small reverence. Ay, and I know the Baskerville Virgil well enough by sight to recognise the wonderful accuracy of the portrait. Is there any thing under the sun that Dr. Holmes cannot paint?

'Such the warm life this dim retreat has known,
Not quite deserted when its guests were flown;
Nay, filled with friends, an unobtrusive set,
Guiltless of calls and cards and etiquette;
Ready to answer, never known to ask;
Claiming no service, prompt for every task.

On those dark shelves no housewife tool profanes,
O'er his mute files the monarch folio reigns;
A mingled race, the wreck of chance and time,
That talk all tongues and breathe of every clime;
Each knows his place, and each may claim his part
In some quaint corner of his master's heart.
This old Decretal, won from Kloss's hoards,
Thick-leafed, brass-cornered, ribbed with oaken boards,
Stands the gray patriarch of the graver rows,
Its fourth ripe century narrowing to its close.
Not daily conned, but glorious still to view,
With glistening letters wrought in red and blue,
There towers Stagira's all-embracing sage,
The Aldine anchor on his opening page.
There sleep the births of Plato's heavenly mind,
In yon dark tome by jealous clasps confined,
"Olim e libris" (dare I call it mine?)
Of Yale's great Head and Killingworth's divine!
In those square sheets the songs of Maro fill
The silvery types of smooth-leafed Baskerville;
High over all, in close compact array,
Their classic wealth the Elzevirs display.
In lower regions of the sacred space
Range the dense volumes of a humbler race;
There grim chirurgeons all their mysteries teach
In spectral pictures or in crabbed speech;
Harvey and Haller, fresh from Nature's page,
Shoulder the dreamers of an earlier age,
Lully and Geber, and the learned crew
That loved to talk of all they could not do.

Why count the rest,—those names of later days
That many love and all agree to praise,—
Or point the titles where a glance may read
The dangerous lines of party or of creed?
Too well, perchance, the chosen list would show
What few may care and none can claim to know.
Each has his features, whose exterior seal
A brush may copy or a sunbeam steal;
Go to his study—on the nearest shelf
Stands the mosaic portrait of himself.
What though for months the tranquil dust descends
Whitening the heads of these mine ancient friends,
While the damp offspring of the modern press
Flaunts on my table with its pictured dress;
Not less I love each dull familiar face,
Nor less should miss it from the appointed place;
I snatch the book along whose burning leaves
His scarlet web our wild romancer weaves,—
Yet, while proud Hester's fiery pangs I share,
My old MAGNALIA must be standing *there*.'

"Such is the opening of the 'Astræa.' It speaks much for the man whose affluence of intellect could afford such an outpouring for a single occasion, the recitation of one solitary evening; and hardly less for the audience that prompted and welcomed such an effort.

"Dr. Holmes's *Collected Poems* is now in the I know not what edition; for as man and as author he commands an immense popularity in Boston, the capital of litera-

ture in North America. The volume is enriched with an autograph and portrait, both eminently characteristic—the handwriting being clear, free, vigorous, delicate, such a hand as could be written by none but an accomplished gentleman; and the engraving just like the picture which I had painted of him in my own mind. There is a print of Hogarth's, "The Election Ball," full of people, with their hats flung into a corner; and it is said of that print, that every hat could be adjusted to the figure to which it belonged. Now, I feel quite certain that if there were a collection of living authors of all countries, Dr. Holmes's head would be assigned to its right owner; the features and expression—not according to this system or that, but according to that stamp of character and intellect which we all tacitly recognise—belong so entirely to him individually as we see him in his works."

In 1852 Dr. Holmes delivered a course of lectures on "The English Poets of the Nineteenth Century." Their style is described as precise and animated, the illustrations sharp and cleanly cut. In the criticism there was a leaning rather to the bold and dashing *bravura* of Scott and Byron than the calm philosophical mood of Wordsworth. When there was any game on the wing, when the "servile herd" of imitators and the poetasters came in view, they were dropped at once by

a felicitous shot. Each lecture closed with a copy of verses.

If our author regarded critically the labours of others, we may be pardoned for just one remark concerning a passage in his own poems. Strange to say, the zoology of America seems as little known to her poets as to ours. Years ago Thomas Campbell wrote,

"On Erie's banks, where tigers steal away;"

and Dr. Holmes, though an American born, a member of the medical profession, and a lecturer on poetry, in his poem entitled "A Vision of the Housatonic." writes,

"Perchance the blue Atlantic's brink,
The broad Ohio's gleam,
Or where the panther stoops to drink
Of wild Missouri's stream."

The intelligent reader need scarcely be informed that on the North-American continent there are neither "tigers" nor "panthers," though that description of useless bank-note called "wild-cat" is rather plentiful.

Mr. Duyckinck, in speaking of our author's publications, very justly pronounces his muse a foe to humbug. "There is," he remarks, "among his poems a professional ballad—the 'Stethoscope Song'—descriptive of the practices of a young physician from Paris, who went about knocking the wind out of old ladies, and

terrifying young ones, mistaking all the while a buzzing fly in the instrument for a frightful array of diseases expressed in a variety of French appellations. The exposure of this young man is a hint of the author's process with the social grievances and absurdities of the day. He clears the moral atmosphere of the morbid literary and other pretences afloat. People breathe freer for his verses. They shake the cobwebs out of the system, and keep up in the world that brisk, healthy current of common sense which is to the mind what circulation is to the body. A tincture of the Epicurean philosophy is not a bad corrective of ultraism, Fourierism, transcendentalism, and other morbidities. Dr. Holmes sees a thing objectively in the open air, and understands what is due to nature and to the inevitable conventionalisms of society. He is a lover of the fields, trees, and streams, and of out-door life; but we question whether his muse is ever clearer in its metaphysics than when, on some convivial occasion, it ranges a row of happy faces, reflected in the wax-illuminated plateau of the dining-table."

In look and manner Dr. Holmes is described as the vivacious, sparkling personage his poems would indicate. He excels in singing his own charming songs, and, with the genius of his country, speaks quite as well as he writes. His smile is easily invoked, he is fond of

puns, inevitable at repartee, and is, perhaps, the most popular person in the city where he resides. It is only in the winter season, however, that he lives in Boston. In summer and autumn the Doctor is at his home on the Housatonic, at Pittsfield, with acres around him inherited from his maternal ancestors, the Wendells, in whom the whole township was once vested. In 1735 the Hon. Jacob Wendell bought the township of Pontoosuc, and his grandson now resides on the remnant of twenty-four thousand ancestral acres—a fact he informs us of in one of his printed addresses.

There is one author in this country whose literary and social standing amongst us offers many points of resemblance to the career of the American author. Mr. Alexander Smith thus compares the two men: "Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes seems to occupy much the same position in Boston that Dr. John Brown occupies in Edinburgh. He is a physician, and a skilful one; he is beloved by all men; he is fond of society; he is a humorist, and rejoices over a joke or a characteristic anecdote as over found treasure; and he excels all his countrymen as a writer of verses of society. Of such verses the basis is good sense, but the good sense must be saved from dulness by a kindly satire, a pleasant music, unexpected rhymes, and a constant flow of witty and fanciful illustrations. It is not necessary that verses

of society should be poetry 'all compact,' but it is absolutely necessary that poetry should be there,—like a flower in the button-hole, like perfume in the handkerchief. And for success in compositions of that class Dr. Holmes has all the good sense, all the music, all the unexpected rhymes, all the wit and fancy, and just the exactest proportion of poetry. Since Praed, no one, perhaps, on this side of the water, has cultivated that difficult branch of writing—in which the knowledge of the man of the world and the art of the poet are required in pretty nearly equal proportions—with more success. His 'Old Punch-Bowl' is one of his best pieces, and exhibits his best qualities."

During the winter season Dr. Holmes amuses himself by occasionally delivering lectures in the surrounding villages and towns—a practice not at all unusual with American authors of celebrity, although such a custom does not obtain with us. The anatomy of the popular lecture he is said to understand perfectly—how large a proportion of wit he may safely associate with the least quantity of dulness.

In giving this selection from Holmes's poems the title of "Wit and Humour," it is only due to the author to say that almost every composition with which he has hitherto favoured the world might very well be included under such a title, for in all of them the author's

peculiar humour—if not his wit—is apparent. It is very evident that with him most things in this life have a bright as well as a dull side—that tragedy is to comedy but as the turning over of a short page. His delightful poem, "Terpsichore," read on the occasion of an annual celebration, is full of the happiest humour:

"TERPSICHORE.*

In narrowest girdle, O reluctant Muse,
In closest frock and Cinderella shoes,
Bound to the foot-lights for thy brief display,
One zephyr step, and then dissolve away!

Short is the space that gods and men can spare
To Song's twin brother when she is not there.
Let others water every lusty line,
As Homer's heroes did their purple wine;
Pierian revellers! Know in strains like these
The native juice, the real honest squeeze,—
Strains that, diluted to the twentieth power,
In yon grave temple† might have filled an hour.
Small room for Fancy's many-chorded lyre,
For Wit's bright rockets with their trains of fire,
For Pathos, struggling vainly to surprise
The iron tutor's tear-denying eyes,
For Mirth, whose finger with delusive wile
Turns the grim key of many a rusty smile,

* Read at the Annual Dinner of the Φ. B. K. Society, at Cambridge, August 24, 1843.

† The Annual Poem is always delivered in the neighbouring church.

For Satire, emptying his corrosive flood
On hissing Folly's gas-exhaling brood,
The pun, the fun, the moral and the joke,
The hit, the thrust, the pugilistic poke,—
Small space for these, so pressed by niggard Time,
Like that false matron, known to nursery rhyme,—
Insidious Morey,—scarce her tale begun,
Ere listening infants weep the story done.

Oh, had we room to rip the mighty bags
That Time, the harlequin, has stuffed with rags!
Grant us one moment to unloose the strings,
While the old gray-beard shuts his leather wings.
But what a heap of motley trash appears
Crammed in the bundles of successive years!
As the lost rustic on some festal day
Stares through the concourse in its vast array,—
Where in one cake a throng of faces runs,
All stuck together like a sheet of buns,—
And throws the bait of some unheeded name,
Or shoots a wink with most uncertain aim,
So roams my vision, wandering over all,
And strives to choose, but knows not where to fall.

Skins of flayed authors,—husks of dead reviews,—
The turn-coat's clothes,—the office-seeker's shoes,—
Scraps from cold feasts, where conversation runs
Through mouldy toasts to oxydated puns,
And grating songs a listening crowd endures,
Rasped from the throats of bellowing amateurs;—
Sermons, whose writers played such dangerous tricks
Their own heresiarchs called them heretics

(Strange that one term such distant poles should link,
The Priestleyan's copper and the Puseyan's zinc);—
Poems that shuffle with superfluous legs
A blindfold minuet over addled eggs,
Where all the syllables that end in ĕd,
Like old dragoons, have cuts across the head;—
Essays so dark Champollion might despair
To guess what mummy of a thought was there,
Where our poor English, striped with foreign phrase,
Looks like a Zebra in a parson's chaise;—
Lectures that cut our dinners down to roots,
Or prove (by monkeys) men should stick to fruits;
Delusive error,—as at trifling charge
Professor Gripes will certify at large;—
Mesmeric pamphlets, which to facts appeal,
Each fact as slippery as a fresh-caught eel;—
And figured heads, whose hieroglyphs invite
To wandering knaves that discount fools at sight;—
Such things as these, with heaps of unpaid bills,
And candy puffs and homœopathic pills,
And ancient bell-crowns with contracted rim,
And bonnets hideous with expanded brim,
And coats whose memory turns the sartor pale,
Their sequels tapering like a lizard's tail;—
How might we spread them to the smiling day,
And toss them, fluttering like the new-mown hay,
To laughter's light or sorrow's pitying shower,
Were these brief minutes lengthened to an hour.

The narrow moments fit like Sunday shoes,—
How vast the heap, how quickly must we choose;

A few small scraps from out his mountain mass
We snatch in haste, and let the vagrant pass.

This shrunken CRUST that Cerberus could not bite,
Stamped (in one corner) 'Pickwick copyright,'
Kneaded by youngsters, raised by flattery's yeast,
Was once a loaf, and helped to make a feast.
He for whose sake the glittering show appears
Has sown the world with laughter and with tears,
And they whose welcome wets the bumper's brim
Have wit and wisdom,—for they all quote him.
So, many a tongue the evening hour prolongs
With spangled speeches,—let alone the songs,—
Statesmen grow merry, lean attorneys laugh,
And weak teetotals warm to half and half,
And beardless Tullys, new to festive scenes,
Cut their first crop of youth's precocious greens,
And wits stand ready for impromptu claps,
With loaded barrels and percussion caps,
And Pathos, cantering through the minor keys,
Waves all her onions to the trembling breeze;
While the great Feasted views with silent glee
His scattered limbs in Yankee fricassee.

Sweet is the scene where genial friendship plays
The pleasing game of interchanging praise;
Self-love, grimalkin of the human heart,
Is ever pliant to the master's art;
Soothed with a word, she peacefully withdraws
And sheathes in velvet her obnoxious claws,
And thrills the hand that smooths her glossy fur
With the light tremor of her grateful purr.

But what sad music fills the quiet hall,
If on her back a feline rival fall;
And, oh, what noises shake the tranquil house,
If old Self-interest cheats her of a mouse!

Thou, O my country, hast thy foolish ways,
Too apt to purr at every stranger's praise;
But, if the stranger touch thy modes or laws,
Off goes the velvet and out come the claws!
And thou, Illustrious! but too poorly paid
In toasts from Pickwick for thy great crusade,
Though, while the echoes laboured with thy name,
The public trap denied thy little game,
Let other lips our jealous laws revile,—
The marble Talfourd or the rude Carlyle,—
But on thy lids, that Heaven forbids to close
Where'er the light of kindly nature glows,
Let not the dollars that a churl denies
Weigh like the shillings on a dead man's eyes!
Or, if thou wilt, be more discreetly blind,
Nor ask to see all wide extremes combined.
Not in our wastes the dainty blossoms smile,
That crowd the gardens of thy scanty isle.
There white-cheeked Luxury weaves a thousand charms;—
Here sun-browned Labour swings his naked arms.
Long are the furrows he must trace between
The ocean's azure and the prairie's green;
Full many a blank his destined realm displays,
Yet see the promise of his riper days:
Far through yon depths the panting engine moves,
His chariots ringing in their steel-shod grooves;

And Erie's naiad flings her diamond wave
O'er the wild sea-nymph in her distant cave!
While tasks like these employ his anxious hours,
What if his corn-fields are not edged with flowers?
Though bright as silver the meridian beams
Shine through the crystal of thine English streams,
Turbid and dark the mighty wave is whirled
That drains our Andes and divides a world!

But lo! a PARCHMENT! Surely it would seem
The sculptured impress speaks of power supreme;
Some grave design the solemn page must claim
That shows so broadly an emblazoned name;
A sovereign's promise! Look, the lines afford
All Honour gives when Caution asks his word;
There sacred Faith has laid her snow-white hands,
And awful Justice knit her iron bands;
Yet every leaf is stained with treachery's dye,
And every letter crusted with a lie.
Alas! no treason has degraded yet
The Arab's salt, the Indian's calumet;
A simple rite, that bears the wanderer's pledge,
Blunts the keen shaft and turns the dagger's edge;—
While jockeying senates stop to sign and seal,
And freeborn statesmen legislate to steal.
Rise, Europe, tottering with thine Atlas load,
Turn thy proud eye to Freedom's blest abode,
And round her forehead, wreathed with heavenly flame,
Bind the dark garland of her daughter's shame!
Ye ocean clouds, that wrap the angry blast,
Coil her stained ensign round its haughty mast,

Or tear the fold that wears so foul a scar,
And drive a bolt through every blackened star!
Once more,—once only,—we must stop so soon,—
What have we here? A GERMAN-SILVER SPOON;
A cheap utensil, which we often see
Used by the dabblers in æsthetic tea;
Of slender fabric, somewhat light and thin,
Made of mixed metal, chiefly lead and tin;
The bowl is shallow, and the handle small,
Marked in large letters with the name JEAN PAUL.
Small as it is, its powers are passing strange;
For all who use it show a wondrous change;
And first, a fact to make the barbers stare,
It beats Macassar for the growth of hair;
See those small youngsters whose expansive ears
Maternal kindness grazed with frequent shears;
Each bristling crop a dangling mass becomes,
And all the spoonies turn to Absaloms!
Nor this alone its magic power displays,
It alters strangely all their works and ways;
With uncouth words they tire their tender lungs,
The same bald phrases on their hundred tongues;
'Ever' 'The Ages' in their page appear,
'Alway' the bedlamite is called a 'Seer;'
On every leaf the 'earnest' sage may scan,—
Portentous bore!—their 'many-sided' man,—
A weak eclectic, groping vague and dim,
Whose every angle is a half-starved whim,
Blind as a mole and curious as a lynx,
Who rides a beetle, which he calls a 'Sphinx.'
And, oh, what questions asked in club-foot rhyme
Of Earth the tongueless and the deaf-mute Time!

Here babbling 'Insight' shouts in Nature's ears
His last conundrum on the orbs and spheres;
There Self-inspection sucks its little thumb,
With 'Whence am I?' and 'Wherefore did I come?'
Deluded infants! will they ever know
Some doubts must darken o'er the world below,
Though all the Platos of the nursery trail
Their 'clouds of glory' at the go-cart's tail?
Oh, might these couplets their attention claim,
That gain their author the Philistine's name
(A stubborn race, that, spurning foreign law,
Was much belaboured with an ass's jaw)!

Melodious Laura! From the sad retreats
That hold thee, smothered with excess of sweets,
Shade of a shadow, spectre of a dream,
Glance thy wan eye across the Stygian stream!
The slip-shod dreamer treads thy fragrant halls,
The sophist's cobwebs hang thy roseate walls,
And o'er the crotchets of thy jingling tunes
The bard of mystery scrawls his crooked 'runes.'
Yes, thou art gone, with all the tuneful hordes
That candied thoughts in amber-coloured words,
And in the precincts of thy late abodes
The clattering verse-wright hammers Orphic odes.
Thou, soft as zephyr, wast content to fly
On the gilt pinions of a balmy sigh;
He, vast as Phœbus on his burning wheels,
Would stride through ether at Orion's heels;
Thy emblem, Laura, was a perfume-jar,
And thine, young Orpheus, is a pewter star;
The balance trembles,—be its verdict told
When the new jargon slumbers with the old!"

A little incident connecting Dr. Holmes's name with that of a distinguished English author may here be mentioned. Some years ago, when Thackeray's famous ballad of the "Three Sailors" was first printed, an altered copy found its way into the American newspapers, and rumour at once fixed upon Holmes as the author. Whether the Doctor ever wrote such a parody—if not, whether he ever took the trouble to correct popular report—we are not informed.

A copy of the imitation reached this country, and appeared in a Liverpool newspaper, with Dr. Holmes's name as the author; but Thackeray's own version being well known here—at least, in certain select literary circles—and the verses having just then been printed in a volume of travelling sketches entitled *Sand and Canvas: a Narrative of Adventures in Egypt; with a Sojourn among the Artists in Rome*, by Samuel Bevan, an American artist who was prosecuting his studies at Rome, and met Michael Angelo Titmarsh one evening at a students' supper, the true author of the verses was soon publicly declared, and the imitation pointed out. As numerous versions of this comical ditty have appeared of late, it may not be so very much out of place to give Mr. Bevan's corrected text here, especially after our allusion to the ballad. Already grave correspondents are writing to *Notes and Queries* to know if the air to which the writer was accustomed to chant it among friends, when

certain small hours of the night had arrived, is preserved. Mr. Bevan had written the verses down from memory when sung by Thackeray at the students' supper before mentioned. The author was not satisfied with the *vivâ voce* copy, so sent the following:

"THE THREE SAILORS.

"There were three sailors in Bristol city,
Who took a boat and went to sea.

"But first with beef and captain's biscuit
And pickled pork they loaded she.

"There was guzzling Jack and gorging Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Bil-*ly*.

"Now very soon, they were so greedy,
They didn't leave not one split pea.

"Says guzzling Jack to gorging Jimmy,
'I am confounded hung-*ery*.'

"Says gorging Jim to guzzling Jacky,
'We have no wittles, so we must eat *we*.'

"Says guzzling Jack to gorging Jimmy,
'O gorging Jim, what a fool you be!

"'There's little Bill, as is young and tender;
We're old and tough; so let's eat *he*.

"'O Bill, we're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the collar of your chemee.'

"When Bill he heard this information,
He used his pocket handkerchee.

"'Oh, let me say my catechism,
As my poor mammy taught to me.'

"'Make haste, make haste,' says guzzling Jacky,
Whilst Jim pulled out his snickersee.

"So Bill went up the maintop-gallant mast,
Where down he fell on his bended knee.

"He scarce had said his catechism,
When up he jumps, 'There's land I see!

"'There's Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Ameri-*key*.

"'There's the British fleet a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K.C.B.'

"So when they come to the admiral's vessel,
He hanged first Jack and flogged Jim-*my*;

"But as for little Bill, he made him
The captain of a seventy-three."

With the ballad was this note:

"Dear Bevan,—I don't like the look of the ballad at all in print; but, if you please, prefer to have it in

this way exactly. 'Be blowed' would never do in a printed ballad of

Yours very truly,

"WM. M. THACKERAY."

The playfulness of Holmes's genius, however, more closely resembles the delightful humour of many of Hood's poems, than the burlesque fun and quaint parody of Thackeray's inimitable verses. Holmes's humour keeps the gentlest smile upon its countenance, whilst it tickles with the softest feather. Hood's plays with its subject, now tenderly, then boisterously—delighting in the sudden change, and bursting forth into the broad grin of the shiny-faced countryman. Thackeray's wit comes from the mouth of a satirist who keeps a rigid, long-drawn face, and enjoys his fun inwardly and without smiles. At its best sallies the eyes open and stare a little more—nothing further. He *assumes* the character, and much of our enjoyment of the fun arises from a knowledge that he is only *acting* the part of the humorist. If the genius presiding over some of Hood's wildest pieces comes to us in uncontrollable laughter, with tears in his eyes and drooles running from the mouth, the countenance of Thackeray's wit is perfectly dry—needing no handkerchief. Holmes's wit lies between the two: the finger may be raised, the hand occasionally waved; but the smile that lights up the

face is not sufficient to displace a curl or crease a shirt-collar. It is of that style of light pleasantry which I always imagine must have characterised the best wits of the old days of the Bath pump-chamber and Beau Nash's assembly-rooms,—the days when wits fluttered in society like butterflies from flower to flower, relating the latest *bon mot* from my lady's tea-table, the last new riddle by the London coach, Dr. Primrose's Oxford epigram, or Sir Jonathan's epitaph on the accident which befell his favourite China punch-bowl—these accompanied by the gentle thrust from a silver-mounted cane, the wily suspense occasioned by the sedate tapping of the gold snuff-box, and introduced by the careful deposit of hat under arm and the profoundest of polite bows.

J. C. H.

PICCADILLY.

☞ I am indebted to Duyckinck's *Cyclopædia of American Literature* for some of the particulars of Holmes's literary career, sketched in mere outline in the preceding pages.

HUMOROUS POEMS.

THE BALLAD OF THE OYSTERMAN.

IT was a tall young oysterman lived by the river-side,
His shop was just upon the bank, his boat was on the tide;
The daughter of a fisherman, that was so straight and slim,
Lived over on the other bank, right opposite to him.

It was the pensive oysterman that saw a lovely maid,
Upon a moonlight evening, a-sitting in the shade;
He saw her wave her handkerchief, as much as if to say,
"I'm wide awake, young oysterman, and all the folks away."

Then up arose the oysterman, and to himself said he,
"I guess I'll leave the skiff at home, for fear that folks should see;
I read it in the story-book, that, for to kiss his dear,
Leander swam the Hellespont,—and I will swim this here."

And he has leaped into the waves, and crossed the shining stream,
And he has clambered up the bank, all in the moonlight gleam;
Oh, there were kisses sweet as dew, and words as soft as rain,—
But they have heard her father's step, and in he leaps again!

Out spoke the ancient fisherman: "Oh, what was that, my daughter?"
"'Twas nothing but a pebble, sir, I threw into the water."
"And what is that, pray tell me, love, that paddles off so fast?"
"It's nothing but a porpoise, sir, that's been a-swimming past."

Out spoke the ancient fisherman: "Now, bring me my harpoon!
I'll get into my fishing-boat, and fix the fellow soon."
Down fell that pretty innocent, as falls a snow-white lamb;
Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks, like seaweed on a clam.

Alas for those two loving ones! she waked not from her swound,
And he was taken with the cramp, and in the waves was drowned;
But Fate has metamorphosed them, in pity of their woe,
And now they keep an oyster-shop for mermaids down below.

TO AN INSECT.

I LOVE to hear thine earnest voice,
Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
Thou pretty Katydid!
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks,—
Old gentlefolks are they,—
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid!
I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
So petulant and shrill.
I think there is a knot of you
Beneath the hollow tree,—
A knot of spinster Katydids,—
Do Katydids drink tea?

Oh, tell me where did Katy live,
And what did Katy do?
And was she very fair and young,
And yet so wicked too?
Did Katy love a naughty man,
Or kiss more cheeks than one?
I warrant Katy did no more
Than many a Kate has done.

Dear me! I'll tell you all about
My fuss with little Jane,
And Ann, with whom I used to walk
So often down the lane,
And all that tore their locks of black,
Or wet their eyes of blue,—
Pray tell me, sweetest Katydid,
What did poor Katy do?

Ah, no! the living oak shall crash,
That stood for ages still,
The rock shall rend its mossy base
And thunder down the hill,
Before the little Katydid
Shall add one word, to tell
The mystic story of the maid
Whose name she knows so well.

Peace to the ever-murmuring race!
And when the latest one
Shall fold in death her feeble wings
Beneath the autumn sun,
Then shall she raise her fainting voice,
And lift her drooping lid,
And then the child of future years
Shall hear what Katy did.

THE DILEMMA.

NOW, by the blessed Paphian queen,
Who heaves the breast of sweet sixteen;
By every name I cut on bark
Before my morning star grew dark;
By Hymen's torch, by Cupid's dart,
By all that thrills the beating heart;
The bright black eye, the melting blue,—
I cannot choose between the two.

I had a vision in my dreams;—
I saw a row of twenty beams;
From every beam a rope was hung,
In every rope a lover swung;
I asked the hue of every eye,
That bade each luckless lover die;
Ten shadowy lips said, heavenly blue,
And ten accused the darker hue.

I asked a matron which she deemed
With fairest light of beauty beamed ;
She answered, some thought both were fair,—
Give her blue eyes and golden hair.
I might have liked her judgment well,
But, as she spoke, she rang the bell,
And all her girls, nor small nor few,
Came marching in,—their eyes were blue.

I asked a maiden; back she flung
The locks that round her forehead hung,
And turned her eye, a glorious one,
Bright as a diamond in the sun,
On me, until beneath its rays
I felt as if my hair would blaze;
She liked all eyes but eyes of green;
She looked at me,—what could she mean?

Ah! many lids Love lurks between,
Nor heeds the colouring of his screen ;
And when his random arrows fly,
The victim falls, but knows not why.
Gaze not upon his shield of jet,
The shaft upon the string is set;
Look not beneath his azure veil,
Though every limb were cased in mail.

Well, both might make a martyr break
The chain that bound him to the stake;
And both, with but a single ray,
Can melt our very hearts away;
And both, when balanced, hardly seem
To stir the scales, or rock the beam;
But that is dearest, all the while,
That wears for us the sweetest smile.

DAILY TRIALS.

BY A SENSITIVE MAN.

OH, there are times
When all this fret and tumult that we hear
Do seem more stale than to the sexton's ear
His own dull chimes.

Ding dong! ding dong!
The world is in a simmer like a sea
Over a pent volcano,—woe is me
All the day long!

From crib to shroud!
Nurse o'er our cradles screameth lullaby,
And friends in boots tramp round us as we die,
Snuffling aloud.

At morning's call
The small-voiced pug-dog welcomes in the sun,
And flea-bit mongrels, wakening one by one,
Give answer all.

When evening dim
Draws round us, then the lonely caterwaul,
Tart solo, sour duet, and general squall,—
These are our hymn.

Women, with tongues
Like polar needles, ever on the jar,—
Men, plugless word-spouts, whose deep fountains are
Within their lungs.

Children, with drums
Strapped round them by the fond paternal ass,
Peripatetics with a blade of grass
Between their thumbs.

Vagrants, whose arts
Have caged some devil in their mad machine,
Which grinding, squeaks, with husky groans between,
Come out by starts.

Cockneys that kill
Thin horses of a Sunday,—men with clams,
Hoarse as young bisons roaring for their dams
From hill to hill.

Soldiers, with guns,
Making a nuisance of the blessed air;
Child-crying bellmen, children in despair,
Screeching for buns.

Storms, thunders, waves!
Howl, crash, and bellow till ye get your fill;
Ye sometimes rest; men never can be still
But in their graves.

TO THE PORTRAIT OF "A LADY."

IN THE ATHENÆUM GALLERY.

WELL, Miss, I wonder where you live,
I wonder what's your name,
I wonder how you came to be
In such a stylish frame;
Perhaps you were a favourite child,
Perhaps an only one;
Perhaps your friends were not aware
You had your portrait done!

Yet you must be a harmless soul;
I cannot think that Sin
Would care to throw his loaded dice,
With such a stake to win;
I cannot think you would provoke
The poet's wicked pen,
Or make young women bite their lips,
Or ruin fine young men.

Pray, did you ever hear, my love,
Of boys that go about,
Who, for a very trifling sum,
Will snip one's picture out?
I'm not averse to red and white,
But all things have their place,—
I think a profile cut in black
Would suit your style of face?

I love sweet features; I will own
That I should like myself
To see my portrait on a wall,
Or bust upon a shelf;
But nature sometimes makes one up
Of such sad odds and ends,
It really might be quite as well
Hushed up among one's friends!

REFLECTIONS OF A PROUD PEDESTRIAN.

I SAW the curl of his waving lash,
And the glance of his knowing eye,
And I knew that he thought he was cutting a dash,
As his steed went thundering by.

And he may ride in the rattling gig,
Or flourish the Stanhope gay,
And dream that he looks exceeding big
To the people that walk in the way;

But he shall think, when the night is still,
On the stable-boy's gathering numbers,
And the ghost of many a veteran bill
Shall hover around his slumbers;

The ghastly dun shall worry his sleep,
And constables cluster around him,
And he shall creep from the wood-hole deep
Where their spectre eyes have found him!

Ay ! gather your reins, and crack your thong,
And bid your steed go faster ;
He does not know, as he scrambles along,
That he has a fool for his master ;

And hurry away on your lonely ride,
Nor deign from the mire to save me ;
I will paddle it stoutly at your side
With the tandem that nature gave me !

THE DORCHESTER GIANT.

THERE was a giant in time of old,
A mighty one was he;
He had a wife, but she was a scold,
So he kept her shut in his mammoth fold;
And he had children three.

It happened to be an election day,
And the giants were choosing a king;
The people were not democrats then,—
They did not talk of the rights of men,
And all that sort of thing.

Then the giant took his children three,
And fastened them in the pen;
The children roared; quoth the giant, "Be still!"
And Dorchester Heights and Milton Hill
Rolled back the sound again.

Then he brought them a pudding stuffed with plums,
As big as the State-House dome;
Quoth he, "There's something for you to eat;
So stop your mouths with your 'lection treat,
And wait till your dad comes home."

So the giant pulled him a chestnut stout,
And whittled the boughs away;
The boys and their mother set up a shout;
Said he, "You're in, and you can't get out,
Bellow as loud as you may."

Off he went, and he growled a tune
As he strode the fields along;
'Tis said a buffalo fainted away,
And fell as cold as a lump of clay,
When he heard the giant's song.

But whether the story's true or not,
It is not for me to show;
There's many a thing that's twice as queer
In somebody's lectures that we hear,
And those are true, you know.

* * * * * *

What are those lone ones doing now,
The wife and the children sad?
Oh, they are in a terrible rout,
Screaming, and throwing their pudding about,
Acting as they were mad.

They flung it over to Roxbury hills,
They flung it over the plain,
And all over Milton and Dorchester too
Great lumps of pudding the giants threw;
They tumbled as thick as rain.

* * * * * *

Giant and mammoth have passed away,
For ages have floated by;
The suet is hard as a marrow-bone,
And every plum is turned to a stone,
But there the puddings lie.

And if, some pleasant afternoon,
You'll ask me out to ride,
The whole of the story I will tell,
And you shall see where the puddings fell,
And pay for the punch beside.

THE MUSIC-GRINDERS.

THERE are three ways in which men take
One's money from his purse,
And very hard it is to tell
Which of the three is worse;
But all of them are bad enough
To make a body curse.

You're riding out some pleasant day,
And counting up your gains;
A fellow jumps from out a bush,
And takes your horse's reins,
Another hints some words about
A bullet in your brains.

It's hard to meet such pressing friends
In such a lonely spot;
It's very hard to lose your cash,
But harder to be shot;
And so you take your wallet out,
Though you would rather not.

Perhaps you're going out to dine,—
Some filthy creature begs
You'll hear about the cannon-ball
That carried off his pegs,
And says it is a dreadful thing
For men to lose their legs.

He tells you of his starving wife,
His children to be fed,—
Poor little, lovely innocents,
All clamorous for bread,—
And so you kindly help to put
A bachelor to bed.

You're sitting on your window-seat,
Beneath a cloudless moon;
You hear a sound that seems to wear
The semblance of a tune,
As if a broken fife should strive
To drown a cracked bassoon.

And nearer, nearer still the tide
Of music seems to come:
There's something like a human voice,
And something like a drum;
You sit in speechless agony,
Until your ear is numb.

Poor "home, sweet home" should seem to be
A very dismal place;
Your "auld acquaintance" all at once
Is altered in the face;
Their discords sting through Burns and Moore,
Like hedgehogs dressed in lace.

You think they are crusaders sent
From some infernal clime,
To pluck the eyes of Sentiment,
And dock the tail of Rhyme,
To crack the voice of Melody,
And break the legs of Time.

But hark! the air again is still,
The music all is ground,
And silence, like a poultice, comes
To heal the blows of sound;
It cannot be,—it is,—it is,—
A hat is going round!

No! Pay the dentist when he leaves
A fracture in your jaw,
And pay the owner of the bear
That stunned you with his paw,
And buy the lobster that has had
Your knuckles in his claw;

But if you are a portly man,
Put on your fiercest frown,
And talk about a constable
To turn them out of town ;
Then close your sentence with an oath,
And shut the window down !

And if you are a slender man,
Not big enough for that,
Or if you cannot make a speech,
Because you are a flat,
Go very quietly and drop
A button in the hat !

THE SEPTEMBER GALE.

I'M not a chicken; I have seen
Full many a chill September,
And though I was a youngster then,
That gale I well remember;
The day before my kite-string snapped,
And I my kite pursuing,
The wind whisked off my palm-leaf hat:
For me two storms were brewing!

It came as quarrels sometimes do,
When married folks get clashing;
There was a heavy sigh or two,
Before the fire was flashing,—
A little stir among the clouds,
Before they rent asunder,—
A little rocking of the trees,
And then came on the thunder.

Lord! how the ponds and rivers boiled,
And how the shingles rattled!
And oaks were scattered on the ground,
As if the Titans battled;
And all above was in a howl,
And all below a clatter,—
The earth was like a frying-pan,
Or some such hissing matter.

It chanced to be our washing-day,
And all our things were drying:
The storm came roaring through the lines,
And set them all a-flying;
I saw the shirts and petticoats
Go riding off like witches;
I lost—ah! bitterly I wept—
I lost my Sunday breeches!

I saw them straddling through the air,
Alas! too late to win them;
I saw them chase the clouds, as if
The devil had been in them;
They were my darlings and my pride,
My boyhood's only riches,—
"Farewell, farewell," I faintly cried,—
"My breeches! O my breeches!"

That night I saw them in my dreams,
How changed from what I knew them!
The dews had steeped their faded threads,
The winds had whistled through them!
I saw the wide and ghastly rents
Where demon-claws had torn them;
A hole was in their amplest part,
As if an imp had worn them.

I have had many happy years,
And tailors kind and clever,
But those young pantaloons have gone
For ever and for ever!
And not till Fate has cut the last
Of all my earthly stitches,
This aching heart shall cease to mourn
My loved, my long-lost breeches!

THE TOADSTOOL.

THERE'S a thing that grows by the fainting flower,
And springs in the shade of the lady's bower;
The lily shrinks and the rose turns pale,
When they feel its breath in the summer gale,
And the tulip curls its leaves in pride,
And the blue-eyed violet starts aside;
But the lily may flaunt, and the tulip stare,
For what does the honest toadstool care?

She does not glow in a painted vest,
And she never blooms on the maiden's breast;
But she comes, as the saintly sisters do,
In a modest suit of a Quaker hue.
And when the stars in the evening skies
Are weeping dew from their gentle eyes,
The toad comes out from his hermit cell,
The tale of his faithful love to tell.

Oh, there is light in her lover's glance,
That flies to her heart like a silver lance;
His breeches are made of spotted skin,
His jacket is tight, and his pumps are thin;
In a cloudless night you may hear his song,
As its pensive melody floats along,
And if you will look by the moonlight fair,
The trembling form of the toad is there.

And he twines his arms round her slender stem,
In the shade of her velvet diadem;
But she turns away in her maiden shame,
And will not breathe on the kindling flame;
He sings at her feet through the livelong night,
And creeps to his cave at the break of light;
And whenever he comes to the air above,
His throat is swelling with baffled love.

THE SPECTRE PIG.

A BALLAD.

IT was the stalwart butcher man
That knit his swarthy brow,
And said the gentle Pig must die,
And sealed it with a vow.

And, oh ! it was the gentle Pig
Lay stretched upon the ground ;
And, ah ! it was the cruel knife
His little heart that found.

They took him then, those wicked men,
They trailed him all along ;
They put a stick between his lips,
And through his heels a thong ;

And round and round an oaken beam
A hempen cord they flung,
And, like a mighty pendulum,
All solemnly he swung !

Now say thy prayers, thou sinful man,
And think what thou hast done,
And read thy catechism well,
Thou bloody-minded one;

For if his sprite should walk by night,
It better were for thee
That thou wert mouldering in the ground,
Or bleaching in the sea.

It was the savage butcher then
That made a mock of sin,
And swore a very wicked oath
He did not care a pin.

It was the butcher's youngest son,—
His voice was broke with sighs,
And with his pocket-handkerchief
He wiped his little eyes ;

All young and ignorant was he,
But innocent and mild ;
And, in his soft simplicity,
Out spoke the tender child :—

" O father, father, list to me;
The Pig is deadly sick,
And men have hung him by his heels,
And fed him with a stick."

It was the bloody butcher then
That laughed as he would die;
Yet did he soothe the sorrowing child,
And bid him not to cry:—

" O Nathan, Nathan, what's a Pig,
That thou shouldst weep and wail?
Come, bear thee like a butcher's child,
And thou shalt have his tail!"

It was the butcher's daughter then,
So slender and so fair,
That sobbed as if her heart would break,
And tore her yellow hair;

And thus she spoke in thrilling tone,—
Fast fell the tear-drops big:—
" Ah! woe is me! Alas! alas!
The Pig! the Pig! the Pig!"

Then did her wicked father's lips
Make merry with her woe,
And call her many a naughty name,
Because she whimpered so.

Ye need not weep, ye gentle ones,—
In vain your tears are shed;
Ye cannot wash his crimson hand,
Ye cannot soothe the dead.

The bright sun folded on his breast
His robes of rosy flame,
And softly over all the west
The shades of evening came.

He slept, and troops of murdered Pigs
Were busy with his dreams;
Loud rang their wild, unearthly shrieks,
Wide yawned their mortal seams.

The clock struck twelve; the Dead hath heard;
He opened both his eyes,
And sullenly he shook his tail
To lash the feeding flies.

One quiver of the hempen cord,—
One struggle and one bound,—
With stiffened limb and leaden eye
The Pig was on the ground!

And straight towards the sleeper's house
His fearful way he wended;
And hooting owl and hovering bat
On midnight wing attended.

Back flew the bolt, up rose the latch,
And open swung the door,
And little mincing feet were heard
Pat, pat along the floor.

Two hoofs upon the sanded floor,
And two upon the bed;
And they are breathing side by side,
The living and the dead!

"Now wake, now wake, thou butcher man!
What makes thy cheek so pale?
Take hold, take hold! thou dost not fear
To clasp a spectre's tail?"

Untwisted every winding coil;
The shuddering wretch took hold;
All like an icicle it seemed,
So tapering and so cold.

"Thou com'st with me, thou butcher man!"—
He strives to loose his grasp,
But, faster than the clinging vine,
Those twining spirals clasp.

And open, open swung the door,
And, fleeter than the wind,
The shadowy spectre swept before,
The butcher trailed behind.

Fast fled the darkness of the night,
And morn rose faint and dim;
They called full loud, they knocked full long,—
They did not waken him.

Straight, straight towards that oaken beam,
A trampled pathway ran;
A ghastly shape was swinging there,—
It was the butcher man.

THE TREADMILL SONG.

THE stars are rolling in the sky,
The earth rolls on below,
And we can feel the rattling wheel
Revolving as we go.
Then tread away, my gallant boys,
And make the axle fly;
Why should not wheels go round about,
Like planets in the sky ?

Wake up, wake up, my duck-legged man,
And stir your solid pegs !
Arouse, arouse, my gawky friend,
And shake your spider legs ;
What though you're awkward at the trade,
There's time enough to learn,—
So lean upon the rail, my lad,
And take another turn.

They've built us up a noble wall,
To keep the vulgar out;
We've nothing in the world to do,
But just to walk about;
So faster, now, you middle men,
And try to beat the ends,—
It's pleasant work to ramble round
Among one's honest friends.

Here, tread upon the long man's toes,
He sha'n't be lazy here,—
And punch the little fellow's ribs,
And tweak that lubber's ear,—
He's lost them both,—don't pull his hair,
Because he wears a scratch,
But poke him in the further eye,
That isn't in the patch.

Hark! fellows, there's the supper-bell,
And so our work is done;
It's pretty sport,—suppose we take
A round or two for fun!
If ever they should turn me out
When I have better grown,
Now hang me, but I mean to have
A treadmill of my own!

MY AUNT.

MY aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
Long years have o'er her flown!
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone;
I know it hurts her,—though she looks
As cheerful as she can;
Her waist is ampler than her life,
For life is but a span.

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!
Her hair is almost gray;
Why will she train that winter curl
In such a spring-like way?
How can she lay her glasses down,
And say she reads as well,
When, through a double convex lens,
She just makes out to spell?

Her father—grandpapa ! forgive
This erring lip its smiles—
Vowed she should make the finest girl
Within a hundred miles ;
He sent her to a stylish school—
'Twas in her thirteenth June—
And with her, as the rules required,
" Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,
To make her straight and tall ;
They laced her up, they starved her down,
To make her light and small;
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
They screwed it up with pins ;—
Oh, never mortal suffered more
In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,
My grandsire brought her back
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth
Might follow on the track);
" Ah," said my grandsire, as he shook
Some powder in his pan,
" What could this lovely creature do
Against a desperate man !"

Alas ! nor chariot, nor barouche,
Nor bandit cavalcade,
Tore from the trembling father's arms
His all-accomplished maid.
For her how happy had it been !
And Heaven had spared to me
To see one sad, ungathered rose
On my ancestral tree.

LINES

RECITED AT THE BERKSHIRE FESTIVAL.

COME back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants, for riches or fame!
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,
She calls you to feast from her bountiful lap.

Come out from your alleys, your courts, and your lanes,
And breathe, like young eagles, the air of our plains;
Take a whiff from our fields, and your excellent wives
Will declare it's all nonsense insuring your lives.

Come you of the law, who can talk, if you please,
Till the man of the moon will allow it's a cheese,
And leave "the old lady that never tells lies,"
To sleep with her handkerchief over her eyes.

Ye healers of men, for a moment decline
Your feats in the rhubarb and ipecac line;
While you shut up your turnpike, your neighbours can
go
The old roundabout road to the regions below.

You clerk, on whose ears are a couple of pens,
And whose head is an ant-hill of units and tens;
Though Plato denies you, we welcome you still
As a featherless biped, in spite of your quill.

Poor drudge of the city! how happy he feels,
With the burs on his legs, and the grass at his heels!
No *dodger* behind, his bandannas to share,
No constable grumbling, "You mustn't walk there!"

In yonder green meadow, to memory dear,
He slaps a mosquito, and brushes a tear;
The dew-drops hang round him on blossoms and shoots;
He breathes but one sigh for his youth and his boots.

There stands the old school-house, hard by the old
church;
That tree at its side had the flavour of birch;
Oh, sweet were the days of his juvenile tricks,
Though the prairie of youth had so many "big licks."

By the side of yon river he weeps and he slumps;
The boots fill with water, as if they were pumps;
Till, sated with rapture, he steals to his bed,
With a glow in his heart, and a cold in his head.

'Tis past,—he is dreaming,—I see him again;
The ledger returns as by legerdemain;
His neckcloth is damp with an easterly flaw,
And he holds in his fingers an omnibus straw.

He dreams the chill gust is a blossomy gale,
That the straw is a rose from his dear native vale;
And murmurs, unconscious of space and of time,
"A 1. Extra-super. Ah, isn't it PRIME!"

Oh, what are the prizes we perish to win
To the first little "shiner" we caught with a pin!
No soil upon earth is so dear to our eyes
As the soil we first stirred in terrestrial pies!

Then come from all parties and parts to our feast;
Though not at the "Astor," we'll give you at least
A bite at an apple, a seat on the grass,
And the best of old—water, at nothing a glass.

VERSES FOR AFTER-DINNER.

Φ B K SOCIETY, 1844.

I WAS thinking last night, as I sat in the cars,
With the charmingest prospect of cinders and stars,
Next Thursday is—bless me!—how hard it will be,
If that cannibal president calls upon me!

There is nothing on earth that he will not devour,
From a tutor in seed to a freshman in flower;
No sage is too gray, and no youth is too green,
And you can't be too plump, though you're never too lean.

While others enlarge on the boiled and the roast,
He serves a raw clergyman up with a toast,
Or catches some doctor, quite tender and young,
And basely insists on a bit of his tongue.

Poor victim, prepared for his classical spit,
With a stuffing of praise, and a basting of wit,
You may twitch at your collar, and wrinkle your brow,
But you're up on your legs, and you're in for it now.

Oh, think of your friends,—they are waiting to hear
Those jokes that are thought so remarkably queer;
And all the Jack Horners of metrical buns
Are prying and fingering to pick out the puns.

Those thoughts which, like chickens, will always thrive best
When reared by the heat of the natural nest,
Will perish if hatched from their embryo dream
In the midst and the glow of convivial steam.

Oh, pardon me, then, if I meekly retire,
With a very small flash of ethereal fire;
No rubbing will kindle your Lucifer match,
If the *fiz* does not follow the primitive scratch.

Dear friends, who are listening so sweetly the while,
With your lips double reefed in a snug little smile,
I leave you two fables, both drawn from the deep,—
The shells you can drop, but the pearls you may keep.

* * * * * *

The fish called the FLOUNDER, perhaps you may know,
Has one side for use and another for show;
One side for the public, a delicate brown,
And one that is white, which he always keeps down.

A very young flounder, the flattest of flats
(And they're none of them thicker than opera hats),
Was speaking more freely than charity taught
Of a friend and relation that just had been caught.

"My! what an exposure! just see what a sight!
I blush for my race,—he is showing his white!
Such spinning and wriggling,—why, what does he wish?
How painfully small to respectable fish!"

Then said an old SCULPIN: "My freedom excuse,
But you're playing the cobbler with holes in your shoes;
Your brown side is up,—but just wait till you're tried,
And you'll find that all flounders are white on one side."

* * * * * *

There's a slice near the PICKEREL's pectoral fins,
Where the *thorax* leaves off and the *venter* begins,
Which his brother, survivor of fish-hooks and lines,
Though fond of his family, never declines.

He loves his relations; he feels they'll be missed;
But that one little tit-bit he cannot resist;
So your bait may be swallowed, no matter how fast,
For you catch your next fish with a piece of the last.

And thus, O survivor, whose merciless fate
Is to take the next hook with the president's bait,
You are lost while you snatch from the end of his line
The morsel he rent from this bosom of mine.

A SONG

FOR THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF HARVARD COLLEGE, 1836.

WHEN the Puritans came over,
Our hills and swamps to clear,
The woods were full of catamounts,
And Indians red as deer,
With tomahawks and scalping-knives,
That make folks' heads look queer;—
Oh, the ship from England used to bring
A hundred wigs a year!

The crows came cawing through the air
To pluck the pilgrims' corn,
The bears came snuffing round the door
Whene'er a babe was born,
The rattlesnakes were bigger round
Than the but of the old ram's horn
The deacon blew at meeting time
On every "Sabbath" morn.

But soon they knocked the wigwams down,
And pine-tree trunk and limb
Began to sprout among the leaves
In shape of steeples slim;
And out the little wharves were stretched
Along the ocean's rim,
And up the little schoolhouse shot,
To keep the boys in trim.

And when at length the College rose,
The sachem cocked his eye
At every tutor's meagre ribs
Whose coat-tails whistled by;
But when the Greek and Hebrew words
Came tumbling from their jaws,
The copper-coloured children all
Ran screaming to the squaws.

And who was on the Catalogue
When college was begun?
Two nephews of the President,
And *the* Professor's son
(They turned a little Indian by,
As brown as any bun);
Lord! how the seniors knocked about
The freshman class of one!

They had not then the dainty things
That commons now afford,
But *succotash* and *homony*
Were smoking on the board;
They did not rattle round in gigs,
Or dash in long-tail blues,
But always on Commencement days
The tutors blacked their shoes.

God bless the ancient Puritans!
Their lot was hard enough;
But honest hearts make iron arms,
And tender maids are tough;
So love and faith have formed and fed
Our true-born Yankee stuff,
And keep the kernel in the shell
The British found so rough!

EVENING.

BY A TAILOR.

DAY hath put on his jacket, and around
His burning bosom buttoned it with stars.
Here will I lay me on the velvet grass,
That is like padding to earth's meagre ribs,
And hold communion with the things about me.
Ah me! how lovely is the golden braid
That binds the skirt of night's descending robe!
The thin leaves, quivering on their silken threads,
Do make a music like to rustling satin,
As the light breezes smooth their downy nap.

Ha! what is this that rises to my touch,
So like a cushion? Can it be a cabbage?
It is, it is that deeply injured flower,
Which boys do flout us with;—but yet I love thee,
Thou giant rose, wrapped in a green surtout.
Doubtless in Eden thou didst blush as bright

As these, thy puny brethren; and thy breath
Sweetened the fragrance of her spicy air;
But now thou seemest like a bankrupt beau,
Stripped of his gaudy hues and essences,
And growing portly in his sober garments.

Is that a swan that rides upon the water?
Oh, no, it is that other gentle bird,
Which is the patron of our noble calling.
I well remember in my early years,
When these young hands first closed upon a goose;
I have a scar upon my thimble finger,
Which chronicles the hour of young ambition.
My father was a tailor, and his father,
And my sire's grandsire, all of them were tailors;
They had an ancient goose,—it was an heirloom
From some remoter tailor of our race.
It happened I did see it on a time
When none was near, and I did deal with it,
And it did burn me—oh, most fearfully!

It is a joy to straighten out one's limbs,
And leap elastic from the level counter,
Leaving the petty grievances of earth,
The breaking thread, the din of clashing shears,
And all the needles that do wound the spirit,

For such a pensive hour of soothing silence.
Kind Nature, shuffling in her loose undress,
Lays bare her shady bosom ; I can feel
With all around me ; I can hail the flowers
That sprig earth's mantle,—and yon quiet bird,
That rides the stream, is to me as a brother.
The vulgar know not all the hidden pockets
Where Nature stows away her loveliness.
But this unnatural posture of the legs
Cramps my extended calves, and I must go
Where I can coil them in their wonted fashion.

NUX POSTCŒNATICA.

I WAS sitting with my microscope, upon my parlour rug,
With a very heavy quarto, and a very lively bug ;
The true bug had been organised with only two antennæ,
But the humbug in the copper-plate would have them twice as many.

And I thought, like Dr. Faustus, of the emptiness of art,
How we take a fragment for the whole, and call the whole a part,
When I heard a heavy footstep, that was loud enough for two,
And a man of forty entered, exclaiming,—" How d'ye do ?"

He was not a ghost, my visitor, but solid flesh and bone;
He wore a Palo Alto hat, his weight was twenty stone;
(It's odd how hats expand their brims as riper years invade,
As if when life had reached its noon, it wanted them for shade!)

I lost my focus,—dropped my book,—the bug, who was a flea,
At once exploded, and commenced experiments on me.
They have a certain heartiness that frequently appals,—
Those medieval gentlemen in semilunar smalls!

"My boy," he said,—(colloquial ways,—the vast, broad-hatted man),—
"Come dine with us on Thursday next,—you must, you know you can;
We're going to have a roaring time, with lots of fun and noise,
Distinguished guests, *et cetera*, the JUDGE, and all the boys."

Not so,—I said,—my temporal bones are showing pretty clear
It's time to stop,—just look and see that hair above this ear;

My golden days are more than spent,—and, what is very
strange,
If these are real silver hairs, I'm getting lots of change.

Besides—my prospects—don't you know that people
won't employ
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a
boy?
And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root?

It's a very fine reflection, when you're etching out a smile
On a copper-plate of faces that would stretch at least a
mile,
That, what with sneers from enemies, and cheapening
shrugs of friends,
It will cost you all the earnings that a month of labour
lends!

It's a vastly pleasing prospect, when you're screwing out
a laugh,
That your very next year's income is diminished by a
half,
And a little boy trips barefoot that Pegasus may go,
And the baby's milk is watered that your Helicon may
flow!

No ;—the joke has been a good one,—but I'm getting fond
of quiet,
And I don't like deviations from my customary diet,
So I think I will not go with you to hear the toast and
speeches,
But stick to old Montgomery Place, and have some pig and
peaches.

The fat man answered :—Shut your mouth, and hear the
genuine creed ;
The true essentials of a feast are only fun and feed ;
The force that wheels the planets round delights in
spinning tops,
And that young earthquake t'other day was great at
shaking props.

I tell you what, philosopher, if all the longest heads
That ever knocked their sinciputs in stretching on their
beds
Were round one great mahogany, I'd beat those fine old
folks
With twenty dishes, twenty fools, and twenty clever
jokes!

Why, if Columbus should be there, the company would
beg
He'd show that little trick of his of balancing the egg!

Milton to Stilton would give in, and Solomon to Salmon,
And Roger Bacon be a bore, and Francis Bacon gammon.

And as for all the "patronage" of all the clowns and boors
That squint their little narrow eyes at any freak of yours,
Do leave them to your prosier friends,—such fellows ought to die
When rhubarb is so very scarce and ipecac so high!

And so I come,—like Lochinvar, to tread a single measure,
To purchase with a loaf of bread a sugar-plum of pleasure,
To enter for the cup of glass that's run for after dinner,
Which yields a single sparkling draught, then breaks and cuts the winner.

Ah, that's the way delusion comes,—a glass of old Madeira,
A pair of visual diaphragms revolved by Jane or Sarah.
And down go vows and promises without the slightest question
If eating words won't compromise the organs of digestion!

And yet, among my native shades, beside my nursing mother,
Where every stranger seems a friend, and every friend a brother,

I feel the old convivial glow (unaided) o'er me stealing,—
The warm, champagny, old-particular, brandy-punchy
feeling.

We're all alike;—Vesuvius flings the scoriæ from his
fountain,
But down they come in volleying rain back to the burning
mountain;
We leave, like those volcanic stones, our precious Alma
Mater,
But will keep dropping in again to see the dear old crater.

THE STETHOSCOPE SONG.

A PROFESSIONAL BALLAD.

THERE was a young man in Boston town,
He bought him a STETHOSCOPE nice and new,
All mounted and finished and polished down,
With an ivory cap and a stopper too.

It happened a spider within did crawl,
And spun a web of ample size,
Wherein there chanced one day to fall
A couple of very imprudent flies.

The first was a bottle-fly, big and blue,
The second was smaller, and thin and long;
So there was a concert between the two,
Like an octave flute and a tavern gong.

Now, being from Paris but recently,
This fine young man would show his skill;
And so they gave him, his hand to try,
A hospital patient extremely ill.

Some said that his *liver* was short of *bile*,
And some that his *heart* was over size,
While some kept arguing all the while
He was crammed with *tubercles* up to his eyes.

This fine young man then up stepped he,
And all the doctors made a pause;
Said he,—The man must die, you see,
By the fifty-seventh of Louis's laws.

But since the case is a desperate one,
To explore his chest it may be well;
For if he should die and it were not done,
You know the *autopsy* would not tell.

Then out his stethoscope he took,
And on it placed his curious ear;
Mon Dieu! said he, with a knowing look,
Why, here is a sound that's mighty queer!

The *bourdonnement* is very clear,—
Amphoric buzzing, as I'm alive!
Five doctors took their turn to hear;
Amphoric buzzing, said all the five.

There's *empyema* beyond a doubt;
We'll plunge a *trocar* in his side.
The diagnosis was made out,
They tapped the patient; so he died.

Now such as hate new-fashioned toys
Began to look extremely glum;
They said that *rattles* were made for boys,
And vowed that his *buzzing* was all a hum.

There was an old lady had long been sick,
And what was the matter none did know:
Her pulse was slow, though her tongue was quick;
To her this knowing youth must go.

So there the nice old lady sat,
With phials and boxes all in a row;
She asked the young doctor what he was at,
To thump her and tumble her ruffles so.

Now, when the stethoscope came out,
The flies began to buzz and whiz;—
O ho! the matter is clear, no doubt;
An *aneurism* there plainly is.

The *bruit de râpe* and the *bruit de scie*
And the *bruit de diable* are all combined;
How happy Bouillaud would be,
If he a case like this could find!

Now, when the neighbouring doctors found
A case so rare had been descried,
They every day her ribs did pound
In squads of twenty; so she died.

Then six young damsels, slight and frail,
Received this kind young doctor's cares;
They all were getting slim and pale,
And short of breath on mounting stairs.

They all made rhymes with "sighs" and "skies,"
And loathed their puddings and buttered rolls,
And dieted, much to their friends' surprise,
On pickles and pencils, and chalk and coals.

So fast their little hearts did bound,
The frightened insects buzzed the more;
So over all their chests he found
The *râle sifflant* and *râle sonore*.

He shook his head;—there's grave disease,—
I greatly fear you all must die;
A slight *post-mortem*, if you please,
Surviving friends would gratify.

The six young damsels wept aloud;
Which so prevailed on six young men,
That each his honest love avowed:
Whereat they all got well again.

This poor young man was all aghast;
The price of stethoscopes came down;
And so he was reduced at last
To practise in a country town.

The doctors being very sore,
A stethoscope they did devise,
That had a rammer to clear the bore,
With a knob at the end to kill the flies.

Now use your ears, all you that can,
But don't forget to mind your eyes,
Or you may be cheated, like this young man,
By a couple of silly, abnormal flies.

ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL.

THIS ancient silver bowl of mine,—it tells of good old times,
Of joyous days, and jolly nights, and merry Christmas chimes;
They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,
That dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar,—so runs the ancient tale;
'Twas hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose arm was like a flail;
And now and then between the strokes, for fear his strength should fail,
He wiped his brow, and quaffed a cup of good old Flemish ale.

'Twas purchased by an English squire to please his
loving dame,
Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing for the
same;
And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was found,
'Twas filled with caudle spiced and hot, and handed
smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan
divine,
Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little wine,
But hated punch and prelacy; and so it was, perhaps,
He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles and
schnaps.

And then, of course, you know what's next,—it left the
Dutchman's shore
With those that in the *Mayflower* came,—a hundred
souls and more,—
Along with all the furniture, to fill their new abodes,—
To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hundred
loads.

'Twas on a dreary winter's eve, the night was closing
dim,
When old Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled it to
the brim;

The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with his sword,
And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in,—the man that never feared,—
He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his yellow beard;
And one by one the musketeers—the men that fought and prayed—
All drank as 'twere their mother's milk, and not a man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming eagle flew;
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's wild halloo;
And there the sachem learned the rule he taught to kith and kin,
"Run from the white man when you find he smells of Hollands gin!"

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their leaves and snows,
A thousand rubs had flattened down each little cherub's nose,

When once again the bowl was filled, but not in mirth or joy—
'Twas mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her parting boy.

Drink, John, she said, 'twill do you good,—poor child, you'll never bear
This working in the dismal trench, out in the midnight air;
And if—God bless me!—you were hurt, 'twould keep away the chill;
So John *did* drink,—and well he wrought that night at Bunker's Hill!

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old English cheer;
I tell you, 'twas a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here.
'Tis but the fool that loves excess;—hast thou a drunken soul?
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl!

I love the memory of the past,—its pressed yet fragrant flowers,—
The moss that clothes its broken walls,—the ivy on its towers;—

Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed,—my eyes grow
moist and dim
To think of all the vanished joys that danced around its
brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it straight to
me;
The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er the liquid be;
And may the cherubs on its face protect me from the
sin
That dooms one to those dreadful words,—"My dear,
where *have* you been?"

THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS.

I WROTE some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And, in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next—the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third—a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth—he broke into a roar;
The fifth—his waistband split;
The sixth—he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man;
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

LATTER-DAY WARNINGS.

WHEN legislators keep the law,
When banks dispense with bolts and locks,—
When berries—whortle, rasp, and straw—
Grow bigger *downwards* through the box,—

When he that selleth house or land
Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,—
When haberdashers choose the stand
Whose window hath the broadest light,—

When preachers tell us all they think,
And party leaders all they mean,—
When what we pay for, that we drink,
From real grape and coffee-bean,—

When lawyers take what they would give,
And doctors give what they would take,—
When city fathers eat to live,
Save when they fast for conscience' sake,—

When one that hath a horse on sale
Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
That holds the iron on the hoof,—

When in the usual place for rips
Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
Where first umbrellas need repair,—

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret bottles harbour not
Such dimples as would hold your fist,—

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before,—
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore;—

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe!

PROLOGUE.

A PROLOGUE? Well, of course the ladies know;—
I have my doubts. No matter,—here we go!
What is a Prologue? Let our Tutor teach:
Pro means beforehand; *logos* stands for speech.
'Tis like the harper's prelude on the strings,
The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings:—
Prologues in metre are to other *pros*
As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.

"The world's a stage,"—as Shakespeare said, one day;
The stage a world—was what he meant to say.
The outside world's a blunder, that is clear;
The real world that Nature meant is here.
Here every foundling finds its lost mamma;
Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa;
Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,
The cheats are taken in the traps they laid;
One after one the troubles all are past,
Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,

When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,
Join hands, *so* happy at the curtain's fall.
Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
And black-browed ruffians always come to grief.
When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,
And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
Cries, "Help, kyind Heaven!" and drops upon her knees
On the green—baize,—beneath the (canvas) trees,—
See to her side avenging Valour fly :—
"Ha! Villain! Draw! Now, Terraitorr, yield or die!"
When the poor hero flounders in despair,
Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,
Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
Sobs on his neck, "*My boy!* My boy!! MY BOY!!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night,
Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
Ladies, attend! While woful cares and doubt
Wrong the soft passion in the world without,
Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
One thing is certain: Love will triumph here!
Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule,—
The world's great masters, when you're out of school,—
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will,—but woman has her way!
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,

Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire,—
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves
Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel,—woman's wilful heart.
All foes you master; but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you're hit.
So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story, made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade.
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.
Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,
Rudolph the headsman rose above the crowd.
His falchion lightened with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armour flashes in the stream.
He sheathed his blade; he turned as if to go;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
"Why strikest not? Perform thy murderous act,"
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
"Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied;
"Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."
He held his snuff-box,—"Now, then, if you please!"
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,

Off his head tumbled,—bowled along the floor,—
Bounced down the steps; the prisoner said no more!

Woman! thy falchion is a glittering eye;
If death lurk in it, oh, how sweet to die!
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head;
We die with love, and never dream we're dead!

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE:

OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY."

A LOGICAL STORY.

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way,
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say ?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.

It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
A chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out.*

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*"),
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
—"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—

That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees;
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through."—
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less.
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten ;—
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day.—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavour of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,

And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whippletree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.

The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
—First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
—What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?

The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once,—
All at once, and nothing first,—
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA.

A NIGHTMARE DREAM BY DAYLIGHT.

DO you know the Old Man of the Sea, of the Sea?
Have you met with that dreadful old man?
If you haven't been caught, you will be, you will be;
For catch you he must and he can.

He doesn't hold on by your throat, by your throat,
As of old in the terrible tale;
But he grapples you tight by the coat, by the coat,
Till its buttons and button-holes fail.

There's the charm of a snake in his eye, in his eye,
And a polypus-grip in his hands;
You cannot go back, nor get by, nor get by,
If you look at the spot where he stands.

Oh, you're grabbed! See his claw on your sleeve, on your sleeve!
It is Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea!
You're a Christian, no doubt you believe, you believe:
You're a martyr, whatever you be!

—Is the breakfast-hour past? They must wait, they must wait,
While the coffee boils sullenly down,
While the Johnny-cake burns on the grate, on the grate,
And the toast is done frightfully brown.

—Yes, your dinner will keep; let it cool, let it cool,
And Madam may worry and fret,
And children half-starved go to school, go to school;
He can't think of sparing you yet.

—Hark! the bell for the train! "Come along! Come along!
For there isn't a second to lose."
"ALL ABOARD!" (He holds on.) "Fsht! ding-dong! Fsht! ding-dong!"—
You can follow on foot, if you choose.

—There's a maid with a cheek like a peach, like a peach,
That is waiting for you in the church;—
But he clings to your side like a leech, like a leech,
And you leave your lost bride in the lurch.

—There's a babe in a fit,—hurry quick! hurry quick!
To the doctor's as fast as you can!
The baby is off, while you stick, while you stick,
In the grip of the dreadful Old Man!

—I have looked on the face of the Bore, of the Bore;
The voice of the Simple I know;
I have welcomed the Flat at my door, at my door;
I have sat by the side of the Slow;

I have walked like a lamb by the Friend, by the Friend,
That stuck to my skirts like a bur;
I have borne the stale talk without end, without end,
Of the sitter whom nothing could stir:

But my hamstrings grow loose, and I shake, and I shake,
At the sight of the dreadful Old Man;
Yea, I quiver and quake, and I take, and I take,
To my legs with what vigour I can!

Oh, the dreadful Old Man of the Sea, of the Sea!
He's come back like the Wandering Jew!
He has had his cold claw upon me, upon me,—
And be sure that he'll have it on you!

ODE FOR A SOCIAL MEETING.

WITH SLIGHT ALTERATIONS BY A TEETOTALER.

COME! fill a fresh bumper,—for why should we go
While the nectar (logwood) still reddens our cups as they flow?
Pour out the rich juices (decoction) still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the rubies (dye-stuff) shall run.

The purple-globed clusters (half-ripened apples) their life-dews have bled;
How sweet is the breath (taste) of the fragrance (sugar-of-lead) they shed!
For summer's last roses (rank poisons) lie hid in the wines (*wines!!!*)
That were garnered by maidens who laughed thro' the vines (stable-boys smoking long-nines).

Then a smile (scowl), and a glass (howl), and a toast (scoff), and a cheer (sneer),
For all the good wine (strychnine and whisky, and ratsbane and beer), and we've some of it here!
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all! (Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all!)

PARSON TURELL'S LEGACY;

OR, THE PRESIDENT'S OLD ARM-CHAIR.

A MATHEMATICAL STORY.

FACTS respecting an old arm-chair.
At Cambridge. Is kept in the College there.
Seems but little the worse for wear.
That's remarkable when I say
It was old in President Holyoke's day.
(One of his boys, perhaps you know,
Died, *at one hundred*, years ago.)
He took lodgings, for rain or shine,
Under green bed-clothes in '69.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do.—
Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.
(Born in a house with a gambrel-roof,—
Standing still, if you must have proof.—
"Gambrel?—Gambrel?"—Let me beg
You'll look at a horse's hinder leg,—

First great angle above the hoof,—
That's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.)
—Nicest place that ever was seen,—
Colleges red and common green,
Side-walks brownish with trees between.
Sweetest spot beneath the skies
When the canker-worms don't rise,—
When the dust, that sometimes flies
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,
In a quiet slumber lies,
Not in the shape of unbaked pies
Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbour it seems to be,
Facing the flow of a boundless sea.
Rows of gray old Tutors stand
Ranged like rocks above the sand;
Rolling beneath them, soft and green,
Breaks the tide of bright sixteen,—
One wave, two waves, three waves, four,—
Sliding up the sparkling floor:
Then it ebbs to flow no more,
Wandering off from shore to shore
With its freight of golden ore!
—Pleasant place for boys to play;—
Better keep your girls away;

Hearts get rolled as pebbles do
Which countless fingering waves pursue,
And every classic beach is strown
With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red stone.

But this is neither here nor there;—
I'm talking about an old arm-chair.
You've heard, no doubt, of PARSON TURELL?
Over at Medford he used to dwell;
Married one of the Mathers' folk;
Got with his wife a chair of oak,—
Funny old chair, with seat like wedge,
Sharp behind and broad front edge,—
One of the oddest of human things,
Turned all over with knobs and rings,—
But heavy, and wide, and deep, and grand,—
Fit for the worthies of the land,—
Chief-Justice Sewall a cause to try in,
Or Cotton Mather to sit—and lie—in.
—Parson Turell bequeathed the same
To a certain student,—SMITH by name;
These were the terms, as we are told:
"Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and holde;
When he doth graduate, then to passe
To ye oldest Youth in ye Senior Classe.

On Payment of" (naming a certain sum)
" By him to whom ye Chaire shall come;
He to ye oldest Senior next,
And soe for ever" (thus runs the text),
" But one Crown lesse then he gave to claime,
That being his Debte for use of same."

Smith transferred it to one of the BROWNS,
And took his money,—five silver crowns.
Brown delivered it up to MOORE,
Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.
Moore made over the chair to LEE,
Who gave him crowns of silver three.
Lee conveyed it unto DREW,
And now the payment, of course, was two.
Drew gave up the chair to DUNN,—
All he got, as you see, was one.
Dunn released the chair to HALL,
And got by the bargain no crown at all.
—And now it passed to a second BROWN,
Who took it and likewise *claimed a crown.*
When *Brown* conveyed it unto WARE,
Having had one crown, to make it fair,
He paid him two crowns to take the chair;
And *Ware*, being honest (as all Wares be),
He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.

Four got ROBINSON; five got DIX;
JOHNSON *primus* demanded six;
And so the sum kept gathering still
Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill.

—When paper money became so cheap,
Folks wouldn't count it, but said "a heap,"
A certain RICHARDS—the books declare—
(A.M. in '90? I've looked with care
Through the Triennial,—*name not there*)—
This person, Richards, was offered then
Eight score pounds, but would have ten;
Nine, I think, was the sum he took,—
Not quite certain,—but see the book.
—By and by the wars were still,
But nothing had altered the Parson's will.
The old arm-chair was solid yet,
But saddled with such a monstrous debt!
Things grew quite too bad to bear,
Paying such sums to get rid of the chair!
But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,
And there was the will in black and white,
Plain enough for a child to spell.
What should be done no man could tell,
For the chair was a kind of nightmare curse,
And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,
They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.
The Governor came with his Light-horse Troop
And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-hoop;
Halberds glittered and colours flew,
French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,
The yellow fifes whistled beneath their teeth,
And the bumble-bee bass-drums boomed beneath;
So he rode with all his band,
Till the President met him, cap in hand.
—The Governor "hefted" the crowns, and said:
"A will is a will, and the Parson's dead."
The Governor hefted the crowns. Said he:
"There is your p'int. And here's my fee.
These are the terms you must fulfil,—
On such conditions I BREAK THE WILL!"
The Governor mentioned what these should be.
(Just wait a minute, and then you'll see.)
The President prayed. Then all was still,
And the Governor rose and BROKE THE WILL!
—"About those conditions?" Well, now you go
And do as I tell you, and then you'll know.
Once a year, on Commencement-day,
If you'll only take the pains to stay,
You'll see the President in the CHAIR,
Likewise the Governor sitting there.

The President rises; both old and young
May hear his speech in a foreign tongue,
The meaning whereof, as lawyers swear,
Is this: Can I keep this old arm-chair?
And then his Excellency bows,
As much as to say that he allows.
The Vice-Gub. next is called by name;
He bows like t'other, which means the same.
And all the officers round 'em bow,
As much as to say that *they* allow.
And a lot of parchments about the chair
Are handed to witnesses then and there,
And then the lawyers hold it clear
That the chair is safe for another year.

God bless you, Gentlemen! Learn to give
Money to colleges while you live.
Don't be silly, and think you'll try
To bother the colleges, when you die,
With codicil this, and codicil that,
That Knowledge may starve while Law grows fat;
For there never was pitcher that wouldn't spill,
And there's always a flaw in a donkey's will!

CONTENTMENT.

"Man wants but little here below."

LITTLE I ask; my wants are few;
I only wish a hut of stone
(A *very plain* brown stone will do),
That I may call my own;—
And close at hand is such a one,
In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
Three courses are as good as ten;—
If Nature can subsist on three,
Thank Heaven for three. Amen!
I always thought cold victual nice,—
My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land;—
Give me a mortgage here and there,
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,
Or trifling railroad share,—

I only ask that Fortune send
A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honours are silly toys, I know,
And titles are but empty names;
I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo—
But only near St. James;
I'm very sure I should not care
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles ; 'tis a sin
To care for such unfruitful things;—
One good-sized diamond in a pin,
Some, *not so large*, in rings,
A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
Will do for me;—I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire
(Good, heavy silks are never dear);
I own perhaps I *might* desire
Some shawls of true Cashmere,—
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
So fast that folks must stop and stare;

An easy gait—two, forty-five—
Suits me; I do not care;—
Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
Titians and Raphaels three or four—
I love so much their style and tone—
One Turner, and no more
(A landscape, foreground golden dirt,
The sunshine painted with a squirt).

Of books but few,—some fifty score
For daily use, and bound for wear;
The rest upon an upper floor;—
Some *little* luxury *there*
Of red morocco's gilded gleam,
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems,—such things as these,
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride;
One Stradivarius, I confess,
Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool;
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
But *all* must be of buhl?
Give grasping pomp its double share,—
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch;
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
I shall not miss them *much*,—
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content!

DE SAUTY.

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE.

Professor. *Blue-Nose.*

PROFESSOR.

TELL me, O Provincial! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal!
Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,
Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,
Holding talk with nations?

Is there a De Sauty ambulant on Tellus,
Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormient in night-cap,
Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature
Three times daily patent?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal?
Or is he a *mythus*—ancient word for "humbug"—
Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed
Romulus and Remus?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty?
Or a living product of galvanic action,
Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse's flint-solution?
Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal!

BLUE-NOSE.

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,
Much-conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!
Pretermit thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward me,
Thou shalt hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,
At the polar focus of the wire electric
Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:
Called himself "De Sauty."

As the small opossum, held in pouch maternal,
Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,
So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,
Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced
stranger,—
Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy,—
And from time to time, in sharp articulation,
Said, "*All right!* De Sauty."

From the lonely station passed the utterance, spreading
Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves of steeples,
Till the land was filled with loud reverberations
Of "*All right!* De Sauty."

When the current slackened, drooped the mystic stranger,—
Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker,—
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odour
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,
Till one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chlor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?) Alumin. (?)
Cuprum (?),
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!
Give us a new cable, then again we'll hear him
Cry, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

ÆSTIVATION.

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM, BY MY LATE LATIN TUTOR.

IN candent ire the solar splendor flames ;
The foles, languescent, pend from arid rames;
His humid front the cive, anheling, wipes,
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine!

To me, alas! no verdurous visions come,
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum,—
No concave vast repeats the tender hue
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue!

Me wretched! Let me curr to quercine shades!
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids!
Oh, might I vole to some umbrageous clump,—
Depart,—be off,—excede,—evade,—erump!

THE OLD MAN DREAMS.

OH, for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I'd rather laugh a bright-haired boy
Than reign a gray-beard king!

Off with the wrinkled spoils of age!
Away with learning's crown!
Tear out life's wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life all love and fame!

—My listening angel heard the prayer,
And, calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair,
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

—Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee, what were life?
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I'll take—my—precious—wife!

—The angel took a sapphire pen
And wrote in rainbow dew,
"The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too!"

—"And is there nothing yet unsaid
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years!"

Why, yes; for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
I could not bear to leave them all;
I'll take—my—girl—and—boys!

The smiling angel dropped his pen,—
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

And so I laughed,—my laughter woke
The household with its noise,—
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the gray-haired boys.

WHAT WE ALL THINK.

THAT age was older once than now,
In spite of locks untimely shed,
Or silvered on the youthful brow;
That babes make love and children wed.

That sunshine had a heavenly glow,
Which faded with those "good old days"
When winters came with deeper snow,
And autumns with a softer haze.

That—mother, sister, wife, or child—
The "best of women" each has known.
Were schoolboys ever half so wild?
How young the grandpapas have grown!

That *but for this* our souls were free,
And *but for that* our lives were blest;
That in some season yet to be
Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene'er we groan with ache or pain,—
Some common ailment of the race,—
Though doctors think the matter plain,—
That ours is "a peculiar case."

That when like babes with fingers burned
We count one bitter maxim more,
Our lesson all the world has learned,
And men are wiser than before.

That when we sob o'er fancied woes,
The angels hovering overhead
Count every pitying drop that flows,
And love us for the tears we shed.

That when we stand with tearless eye
And turn the beggar from our door,
They still approve us when we sigh,
"Ah, had I but *one thousand more!*"

Though temples crowd the crumbled brink
O'erhanging truth's eternal flow,
Their tablets bold with *what we think*,
Their echoes dumb to *what we know;*

That one unquestioned text we read,
All doubt beyond, all fear above,
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed
Can burn or blot it: GOD IS LOVE!

THE COMET.

THE Comet! He is on his way,
And singing as he flies;
The whizzing planets shrink before
The spectre of the skies;
Ah! well may regal orbs burn blue,
And satellites turn pale,
Ten million cubic miles of head,
Ten billion leagues of tail!

On, on by whistling spheres of light,
He flashes and he flames;
He turns not to the left nor right,
He asks them not their names;
One spurn from his demoniac heel,—
Away, away they fly,
Where darkness might be bottled up
And sold for "Tyrian dye."

And what would happen to the land,
And how would look the sea,
If in the bearded devil's path
Our earth should chance to be?
Full hot and high the sea would boil,
Full red the forests gleam;
Methought I saw and heard it all
In a dyspeptic dream!

I saw a tutor take his tube
The Comet's course to spy;
I heard a scream,—the gathered rays
Had stewed the tutor's eye;
I saw a fort,—the soldiers all
Were armed with goggles green;
Pop cracked the guns! whiz flew the balls!
Bang went the magazine!

I saw a poet dip a scroll
Each moment in a tub;
I read upon the warping back,
"The Dream of Beelzebub;"
He could not see his verses burn,
Although his brain was fried,
And ever and anon he bent
To wet them as they dried.

I saw the scalding pitch roll down
The crackling, sweating pines,
And streams of smoke, like water-spouts,
Burst through the rumbling mines;
I asked the firemen why they made
Such noise about the town;
They answered not,—but all the while
The breaks went up and down.

I saw a roasting pullet sit
Upon a baking egg;
I saw a cripple scorch his hand
Extinguishing his leg;
I saw nine geese upon the wing
Towards the frozen pole,
And every mother's gosling fell
Crisped to a crackling coal.

I saw the ox that browsed the grass
Writhe in the blistering rays,
The herbage in his shrinking jaws
Was all a fiery blaze;
I saw huge fishes, boiled to rags,
Bob through the bubbling brine;
And thoughts of supper crossed my soul;
I had been rash at mine.

Strange sights ! strange sounds ! O fearful dream !
Its memory haunts me still :
The steaming sea, the crimson glare,
That wreathed each wooded hill ;
Stranger ! if through thy reeling brain
Such midnight visions sweep,
Spare, spare, oh, spare thine evening meal,
And sweet shall be thy sleep !

THE LAST BLOSSOM.

THOUGH young no more, we still would dream
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles;
The leagues of life to graybeards seem
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice?
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,
And many a Holy Father's "niece"
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,
We think upon those ladies twain
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her lord's Olympian smile
His lotus-loving Memphian lies,—
The musky daughter of the Nile,
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet
The morning of that blissful day,
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,
And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,
A lasso, with its leaping chain,
Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew
O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,
Sweet vision, waited for so long!
Dove that would seek the poet's cage,
Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid,
Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told!
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade
Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms!—love heeds not years;
No frost the bud of passion knows.—
Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?
A voice behind me uttered,—Rose!

Sweet was her smile,—but not for me;
Alas! when woman looks *too* kind,
Just turn your foolish head and see,—
Some youth is walking close behind!

"THE BOYS."

HAS there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?"—Yes! white if we please;
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake!
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old :—
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge;"
It's a neat little fiction,—of course, it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker,"—the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?
That's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;
There's the "Reverend" What's his name?—don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the Royal Society thought it was *true!*
So they chose him right in,—a good joke it was too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire
We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;

But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing?—You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen;
And I sometimes have asked, Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of Thy children. THE BOYS!

January 6, 1859.

A SEA DIALOGUE.

Cabin Passenger. *Man at Wheel.*

CABIN PASSENGER.

FRIEND, you seem thoughtful. I not wonder much
That he who sails the ocean should be sad.
I am myself reflective.—When I think
Of all this wallowing beast, the Sea, has sucked
Between his sharp, thin lips, the wedgy waves;
What heaps of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls;
What piles of shekels, talents, ducats, crowns,
What bales of Tyrian mantles, Indian shawls,
Of laces that have blanked the weavers' eyes,
Of silken tissues, wrought by worm and man,
The half-starved workman, and the well-fed worm;
What marbles, bronzes, pictures, parchments, books;
What many-lobuled, thought-engendering brains;
Lie with the gaping sea-shells in his maw,—
I, too, am silent; for all language seems
A mockery, and the speech of man is vain.

O mariner, we look upon the waves
And they rebuke our babbling. "Peace!" they say,—
"Mortal, be still!" My noisy tongue is hushed,
And with my trembling finger on my lips
My soul exclaims in ecstasy—

MAN AT WHEEL.

Belay!

CABIN PASSENGER.

Ah, yes! "Delay,"—it calls, "nor haste to break
The charm of stillness with an idle word!"
O mariner, I love thee, for thy thought
Strides even with my own, nay, flies before.
Thou art a brother to the wind and wave;
Have they not music for thine ear as mine,
When the wild tempest makes thy ship his lyre,
Smiting a cavernous basso from the shrouds
And climbing up his gamut through the stays,
Through buntlines, bowlines, ratlines, till it shrills
An alto keener than the locust sings,
And all the great Æolian orchestra
Storms out its mad sonata in the gale?
Is not the scene a wondrous and—

MAN AT WHEEL.

Avast!

CABIN PASSENGER.

Ah, yes, a vast, a vast and wondrous scene!
I see thy soul is open as the day
That holds the sunshine in its azure bowl
To all the solemn glories of the deep!
Tell me, O mariner, dost thou never feel
The grandeur of thine office,—to control
The keel that cuts the ocean like a knife,
And leaves a wake behind it like a seam
In the great shining garment of the world?

MAN AT WHEEL.

Belay y'r jaw, y' swab! y' hoss-marine!
(*To the Captain.*)
Ay, ay, Sir! Stiddy, Sir! Sou'wes' b' sou'!

November 10, 1864.

THE JUBILEE.

NAUTICUS LOQUITUR.

I'VE heerd some talk of a Jubilee
To celebrate "our" "victory;"—
Now I'm a chap as follers the sea,
'n' f'r 'z I know, nob'dy 'll listen to me,
B't I'll tell y' jest what's my idee.

When you 'n' a fellah 'z got your grip,
Before y' 've settled it which can whip,
I won't say nothin'. You let her rip!
Knock him to pieces, chip by chip!
But don't fire into a sinkin' ship!

I tell y', shipmates 'n' lan'sm'n too,
There's chaps aboard th't's 'z good 'z you,—
'Twas God A'mighty that made her crew!
FOLKS is FOLKS! 'n' that's 'z true
'z that land is black 'n' water blue!

Come tell us, shipmates, ef y' can,
Was there ever a crew sence th' worl' began
That sech a wallopin' had to stan'
'z them poor fellahs th't tried t' man
The great Chicago catamaran!

Wahl, this is what y' 've hed t' do,—
T' lick 'em,—but not t' drown 'em too;
There's some good fellahs, 'n' not a few,
That's a swimmin' about, all chilled 'n' blue,
'n' wants t' be h'isted aboard o' you!

Come, drowning foes! your friends we'll be,—
We've licked! Haw! haw! You're licked! Hee! hee!
Hooraw for you! Hooraw for we!
We'll wait till the whole wide land is free,
And then we'll have our JUBILEE!

November 12, 1864.

THE SWEET LITTLE MAN.

DEDICATED TO THE STAY-AT-HOME RANGERS.

NOW, while our soldiers are fighting our battles,
Each at his post to do all that he can,
Down among rebels and contraband chattels,
What are you doing, my sweet little man?

All the brave boys under canvas are sleeping,
All of them pressing to march with the van,
Far from the home where their sweethearts are weeping;
What are you waiting for, sweet little man?

You with the terrible warlike moustaches,
Fit for a colonel or chief of a clan,
You with the waist made for sword-belts and sashes,
Where are your shoulder-straps, sweet little man?

Bring him the buttonless garment of woman!
Cover his face lest it freckle and tan;
Muster the Apron-string Guards on the Common,—
That is the corps for the sweet little man!

Give him for escort a file of young misses,
Each of them armed with a deadly rattan;
They shall defend him from laughter and hisses,
Aimed by low boys at the sweet little man!

All the fair maidens about him shall cluster,
Pluck the white feathers from bonnet and fan,
Make him a plume like a turkey-wing duster,—
That is the crest for the sweet little man!

Oh, but the Apron-string Guards are the fellows!
Drilling each day since our troubles began,—
"Handle your walking-sticks!" "Shoulder umbrellas!"
That is the style for the sweet little man.

Have we a nation to save? In the first place
Saving ourselves is the sensible plan,—
Surely the spot where there's shooting's the worst place
Where I can stand, says the sweet little man.

Catch me confiding my person with strangers!
Think how the cowardly Bull-Runners ran!
In the brigade of the Stay-at-home Rangers
Marches my corps, says the sweet little man.

Such was the stuff of the Malakoff-takers,
Such were the soldiers that scaled the Redan;
Truculent housemaids and bloodthirsty Quakers,
Brave not the wrath of the sweet little man!

Yield him the side-walk, ye nursery maidens!
Sauve qui peut! Bridget; and right about! Ann;—
Fierce as a shark in a school of menhadens,
See him advancing, the sweet little man!

When the red flails of the battle-field's threshers
Beat out the continent's wheat from its bran,
While the wind scatters the chaffy seceshers,
What will become of our sweet little man?

When the brown soldiers come back from the borders,
How will he look while his features they scan?
How will he feel when he gets marching orders,
Signed by his lady-love? sweet little man!

Fear not for him, though the rebels expect him,—
Life is too precious to shorten its span;
Woman her broomstick shall raise to protect him,—
Will she not fight for the sweet little man!

Now, then, nine cheers for the Stay-at-home Ranger!
Blow the great fish-horn, and beat the big pan!
First in the field that is farthest from danger,
Take your white-feather plume, sweet little man!

OUR OLDEST FRIEND.

READ TO "THE BOYS OF '29," JAN. 5, 1865.

I GIVE you the health of the oldest friend
That, short of eternity, earth can lend,—
A friend so faithful and tried and true
That nothing can wean him from me and you.

When first we screeched in the sudden blaze
Of the daylight's blinding and blasting rays,
And gulped at the gaseous, groggy air,
This old, old friend stood waiting there.

And when, with a kind of mortal strife,
We had gasped and choked into breathing life,
He watched by the cradle, day and night,
And held our hands till we stood upright.

From gristle and pulp our frames have grown
To stringy muscle and solid bone;
While we were changing, he altered not;
We might forget, but he never forgot.

He came with us to the college class,—
Little cared he for the steward's pass!
All the rest must pay their fee,
But the grim old dead-head entered free.

He stayed with us while we counted o'er
Four times each of the seasons four;
And with every season, from year to year,
The dear name Classmate he made more dear.

He never leaves us,—he never will,
Till our hands are cold, and our hearts are still;
On birthdays, and Christmas, and New-Years too,
He always remembers both me and you.

Every year this faithful friend
His little present is sure to send;
Every year, wheresoe'er we be,
He wants a keepsake from you and me.

How he loves us! he pats our heads,
And lo! they are gleaming with silver threads;
And he's always begging one lock of hair,
Till our shining crowns have nothing to wear.

At length he will tell us, one by one,
"My child, your labour on earth is done;
And now you must journey afar to see
My elder brother,—Eternity!"

And so, when long, long years have passed,
Some dear old fellow will be the last,—
Never a boy alive but he
Of all our goodly company!

When he lies down, but not till then,
Our kind Class-Angel will drop the pen
That writes in the day-book kept above
Our lifelong record of faith and love.

So here's a health, in homely rhyme,
To our oldest classmate, Father Time!
May our last survivor live to be
As bald, but as wise and tough as he!

A FAREWELL TO AGASSIZ.

HOW the mountains talked together,
Looking down upon the weather,
When they heard our friend had planned his
Little trip among the Andes!
How they'll bare their snowy scalps
To the climber of the Alps
When the cry goes through their passes,
"Here comes the great Agassiz!"
"Yes, I'm tall," says Chimborazo,
"But I wait for him to say so,—
That's the only thing that lacks,—he
Must see me, Cotopaxi!"
"Ay, ay!" the fire-peak thunders,
"And he must view my wonders!
I'm but a lonely crater
Till I have him for spectator!"
The mountain hearts are yearning,
The lava-torches burning,

The rivers bend to meet him,
The forests bow to greet him,
It thrills the spinal column
Of fossil fishes solemn,
And glaciers crawl the faster
To the feet of their old master!

Heaven keep him well and hearty,
Both him and all his party!
From the sun that broils and smites,
From the centipede that bites,
From the hail-storm and the thunder,
From the vampire and the condor,
From the gust upon the river,
From the sudden earthquake shiver,
From the trip of mule or donkey,
From the midnight howling monkey,
From the stroke of knife or dagger,
From the puma, and the jaguar,
From the horrid boa-constrictor
That has scared us in the pictur',
From the Indians of the Pampas
Who would dine upon their grampas,
From every beast and vermin
That to think of sets us squirming,
From every snake that tries on

The traveller his p'ison,
From every pest of Natur',
Likewise the alligator,
And from two things left behind him,—
(Be sure they'll try to find him),
The tax-bill and assessor,—
Heaven keep the great Professor!

May he find, with his apostles,
That the land is full of fossils,
That the waters swarm with fishes
Shaped according to his wishes,
That every pool is fertile
In fancy kinds of turtle,
New birds around him singing,
New insects, never stinging,
With a million novel data
About the articulata,
And facts that strip off all husks
From the history of mollusks.

And when, with loud Te Deum,
He returns to his Museum,
May he find the monstrous reptile
That so long the land has kept ill

By Grant and Sherman throttled,
And by Father Abraham bottled
(All specked and streaked and mottled
With the scars of murderous battles,
Where he clashed the iron rattles
That gods and men he shook at),
For all the world to look at!

God bless the great Professor!
And Madam too, God bless her!
Bless him and all his band,
On the sea and on the land,
As they sail, ride, walk, and stand,—
Bless them head and heart and hand,
Till their glorious raid is o'er,
And they touch our ransomed shore!
Then the welcome of a nation,
With its shout of exultation,
Shall awake the dumb creation,
And the shapes of buried æons
Join the living creatures' pæans,
While the mighty megalosaurus
Leads the palæozoic chorus,—
God bless the great Professor,
And the land his proud possessor,—
Bless them now and evermore!

THE LAST LEAF.

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said,—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago,—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff;
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
    In the spring,—
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
    Where I cling.

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

THERE was a sound of hurrying feet,
A tramp on echoing stairs,
There was a rush along the aisles,—
It was the hour of prayers.

And on, like Ocean's midnight wave,
The current rolled along,
When, suddenly, a stranger form
Was seen amidst the throng.

He was a dark and swarthy man,
That uninvited guest;
A faded coat of bottle-green
Was buttoned round his breast.

There was not one among them all
Could say from whence he came;
Nor beardless boy, nor ancient man,
Could tell that stranger's name.

All silent as the sheeted dead,
In spite of sneer and frown,
Fast by a gray-haired senior's side
He sat him boldly down.

There was a look of horror flashed
From out the tutor's eyes;
When all around him rose to pray,
The stranger did not rise!

A murmur broke along the crowd,
The prayer was at an end;
With ringing heels and measured tread
A hundred forms descend.

Through sounding aisle, o'er grating stair,
The long procession poured,
Till all were gathered on the seats
Around the Commons board.

That fearful stranger! down he sat,
Unasked, yet undismayed;
And on his lip a rising smile
Of scorn or pleasure played.

He took his hat and hung it up,
With slow but earnest air;
He stripped his coat from off his back,
And placed it on a chair.

Then from his nearest neighbour's side
A knife and plate he drew;
And reaching out his hand again,
He took his teacup too.

How fled the sugar from the bowl!
How sunk the azure cream!
They vanished like the shapes that float
Upon a summer's dream.

A long, long draught,—an outstretched hand,—
And crackers, toast, and tea,
They faded from the stranger's touch
Like dew upon the sea.

Then clouds were dark on many a brow,
Fear sat upon their souls,
And, in a bitter agony,
They clasped their buttered rolls.

A whisper trembled through the crowd,—
Who could the stranger be?
And some were silent, for they thought
A cannibal was he.

What if the creature should arise,—
For he was stout and tall,—
And swallow down a sophomore,
Coat, crow's-foot, cap, and all!

All sullenly the stranger rose;
They sat in mute despair;
He took his hat from off the peg,
His coat from off the chair.

Four freshmen fainted on the seat,
Six swooned upon the floor;
Yet on the fearful being passed,
And shut the chapel door.

There is full many a starving man,
That walks in bottle-green,
But never more that hungry one
In Commons-hall was seen.

Yet often at the sunset hour,
When tolls the evening bell,
The freshman lingers on the steps,
That frightful tale to tell.

LINES BY A CLERK.

OH! I did love her dearly,
And gave her toys and rings,
And I thought she meant sincerely,
When she took my pretty things;
But her heart has grown as icy
As a fountain in the fall,
And her love that was so spicy,
It did not last at all.

I gave her once a locket,
It was filled with my own hair,
And she put it in her pocket
With very special care.
But a jeweller has got it,—
He offered it to me,—
And another that is not it
Around her neck I see.

For my cooings and my billings
I do not now complain,
But my dollars and my shillings
Will never come again;
They were earned with toil and sorrow,
But I never told her that,
And now I have to borrow,
And want another hat.

Think, think, thou cruel Emma,
When thou shalt hear my woe,
And know my sad dilemma,
That thou hast made it so.
See, see my beaver rusty,
Look, look upon this hole,
This coat is dim and dusty;
Oh, let it rend thy soul!

Before the gates of fashion
I daily bent my knee,
But I sought the shrine of passion,
And found my idol,—thee;
Though never love intenser
Had bowed a soul before it,
Thine eye was on the censer,
And not the hand that bore it.

TO THE PORTRAIT OF "A GENTLEMAN."

IN THE ATHENÆUM GALLERY.

IT may be so,—perhaps thou hast
A warm and loving heart;
I will not blame thee for thy face,
Poor devil as thou art.

That thing, thou fondly deem'st a nose,
Unsightly though it be,—
In spite of all the cold world's scorn,
It may be much to thee.

Those eyes,—among thine elder friends
Perhaps they pass for blue;—
No matter,—if a man can see,
What more have eyes to do?

Thy mouth,—that fissure in thy face
By something like a chin,—
May be a very useful place
To put thy victual in.

I know thou hast a wife at home,
I know thou hast a child,
By that subdued, domestic smile
Upon thy features mild.

That wife sits fearless by thy side,
That cherub on thy knee;
They do not shudder at thy looks,
They do not shrink from thee.

Above thy mantle is a hook,—
A portrait once was there;
It was thine only ornament,—
Alas! that hook is bare.

She begged thee not to let it go,
She begged thee all in vain;
She wept,—and breathed a trembling prayer
To meet it safe again.

It was a bitter sight to see
That picture torn away;
It was a solemn thought to think
What all her friends would say!

And often in her calmer hours,
And in her happy dreams,
Upon its long-deserted hook
The absent portrait seems.

Thy wretched infant turns his head
In melancholy wise,
And looks to meet the placid star
Of those unbending eyes.

I never saw thee, lovely one,—
Perchance I never may;
It is not often that we cross
Such people in our way;

But if we meet in distant years,
Or on some foreign shore,
Sure I can take my Bible oath,
I've seen that face before.

THE HOT SEASON.

THE folks, that on the first of May
Wore winter-coats and hose,
Began to say, the first of June,
"Good Lord! how hot it grows."
At last two Fahrenheits blew up,
And killed two children small,
And one barometer shot dead
A tutor with its ball!

Now all day long the locusts sang
Among the leafless trees;
Three new hotels warped inside out,
The pumps could only wheeze;
And ripe old wine, that twenty years
Had cobwebbed o'er in vain,
Came spouting through the rotten corks,
Like Joly's best champagne!

The Worcester locomotives did
Their trip in half an hour ;
The Lowell cars ran forty miles
Before they checked the power ;
Roll brimstone soon became a drug,
And loco-focos fell ;
All asked for ice, but every where
Saltpetre was to sell.

Plump men of mornings ordered tights,
But, ere the scorching noons,
Their candle-moulds had grown as loose
As Cossack pantaloons !
The dogs ran mad,—men could not try
If water they would choose ;
A horse fell dead,—he only left
Four red-hot, rusty shoes !

But soon the people could not bear
The slightest hint of fire ;
Allusions to caloric drew
A flood of savage ire ;
The leaves on heat were all torn out
From every book at school,
And many blackguards kicked and caned,
Because they said,—"Keep cool !"

The gas-light companies were mobbed,
The bakers all were shot,
The penny press began to talk
Of Lynching Doctor Nott;
And all about the warehouse-steps
Were angry men in droves,
Crashing and splintering through the doors
To smash the patent stoves!

The abolition men and maids
Were tanned to such a hue,
You scarce could tell them from their friends,
Unless their eyes were blue;
And, when I left, society
Had burst its ancient guards,
And Brattle Street and Temple Place
Were interchanging cards!

A MODEST REQUEST.

COMPLIED WITH AFTER THE DINNER AT PRESIDENT EVERETT'S INAUGURATION.

SCENE,—a back parlour in a certain square,
Or court, or lane,—in short, no matter where ;
Time,—early morning, dear to simple souls,
Who love its sunshine, and its fresh-baked rolls ;
Persons,—take pity on this tell-tale blush,
That, like the Æthiop, whispers, " Hush, oh, hush !"

Delightful scene ! where smiling comfort broods,
Nor business frets, nor anxious care intrudes ;
O si sic omnia ! were it ever so !
But what is stable in this world below !
Medio e fonte—Virtue has her faults,—
The clearest fountains taste of Epsom salts ;
We snatch the cup and lift to drain it dry,—
Its central dimple holds a drowning fly !

Strong is the pine by Maine's ambrosial streams,
But stronger augers pierce its thickest beams ;

No iron gate, no spiked and panelled door,
Can keep out death, the postman, or the bore ;—
Oh, for a world where peace and silence reign,
And blunted dulness terebrates in vain !
—The door-bell jingles,—enter Richard Fox,
And takes this letter from his leathern box.

" Dear Sir,
In writing on a former day,
One little matter I forgot to say ;
I now inform you in a single line,
On Thursday next our purpose is to *dine*.
The act of feeding, as you understand,
Is but a fraction of the work in hand ;
Its nobler half is that ethereal meat
The papers call ' the intellectual treat ;'
Songs, speeches, toasts, around the festive board,
Drowned in the juice the College pumps afford ;
For only water flanks our knives and forks,
So, sink or float, we swim without the corks.
Yours is the art, by native genius taught,
To clothe in eloquence the naked thought ;
Yours is the skill its music to prolong
Through the sweet effluence of mellifluous song ;
Yours the quaint trick to cram the pithy line
That cracks so crisply over bubbling wine ;

And since success your various gifts attends,
We—that is, I and all your numerous friends—
Expect from you—your single self a host—
A speech, a song, excuse me, *and* a toast;
Nay, not to haggle on so small a claim,
A few of each, or several of the same.
(Signed) Yours, *most truly*, ——."

No! my sight must fail,—
If that ain't Judas on the largest scale!

Well, this *is* modest!—nothing else than that?
My coat? my boots? my pantaloons? my hat?
My stick? my gloves? as well as all my wits,
Learning, and linen?—every thing that fits!

Jack, said my lady, is it grog you'll try,
Or punch, or toddy, if perhaps you're dry?
Ah, said the sailor, though I can't refuse,
You know, my lady, 'tain't for me to choose;—
I'll take the grog to finish off my lunch,
And drink the toddy while you mix the punch.

THE SPEECH. (The speaker, rising to be seen,
Looks very red, because so very green.)

I rise—I rise—with unaffected fear
(Louder !—speak louder !—who the deuce can hear ?),
I rise—I said—with undisguised dismay—
—Such are my feelings as I rise, I say !
Quite unprepared to face this learned throng,
Already gorged with eloquence and song ;
Around my view are ranged on either hand
The genius, wisdom, virtue of the land ;
" Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed"
Close at my elbow stir their lemonade ;
Would you like Homer learn to write and speak,
That bench is groaning with its weight of Greek ;
Behold the naturalist that in his teens
Found six new species in a dish of greens ;
And, lo, the master in a statelier walk,
Whose annual ciphering takes a ton of chalk ;
And there the linguist, that by common roots
Through all their nurseries tracks old Noah's shoots,—
How Shem's proud children reared the Assyrian piles,
While Ham's were scattered through the Sandwich Isles !
—Fired at the thought of all the present shows,
My kindling fancy down the future flows ;
I see the glory of the coming days
O'er Time's horizon shoot its streaming rays ;
Near and more near the radiant morning draws
In living lustre (rapturous applause) ;

From east to west the blazing heralds run,
Loosed from the chariot of the ascending sun,
Through the long vista of uncounted years
In cloudless splendour (three tremendous cheers).
My eye prophetic, as the depths unfold,
Sees a new advent of the age of gold ;
While o'er the scene new generations press,
New heroes rise the coming time to bless,—
Not such as Homer's, who, we read in Pope,
Dined without forks and never heard of soap,—
Not such as May to Marlborough Chapel brings,
Lean, hungry, savage, anti-everythings,
Copies of Luther in the pasteboard style,—
But genuine articles—the true Carlyle;
While far on high the blazing orb shall shed
Its central light on Harvard's holy head,
And learning's ensigns ever float unfurled
Here in the focus of the new-born world!
The speaker stops, and, trampling down the pause,
Roars through the hall the thunder of applause,
One stormy gust of long suspended Ahs !
One whirlwind chaos of insane hurrahs!

The Song. But this demands a briefer line,—
A shorter muse, and not the old long Nine ;—

Long metre answers for a common song,
Though common metre does not answer long.

She came beneath the forest dome
To seek its peaceful shade,
An exile from her ancient home—
A poor forsaken maid;
No banner flaunting high above,
No blazoned cross, she bore;
One holy book of light and love
Was all her worldly store.

The dark brown shadows passed away,
And wider spread the green,
And where the savage used to stray,
The rising mart was seen;
So, when the laden winds had brought
Their showers of golden rain,
Her lap some precious gleanings caught,
Like Ruth's amid the grain.

But wrath soon gathered uncontrolled
Among the baser churls,
To see her ancles red with gold,
Her forehead white with pearls;

"Who gave to thee the glittering bands
That lace thine azure veins?
Who bade thee lift those snow-white hands
We bound in gilded chains?"

These are the gems my children gave,
The stately dame replied;
The wise, the gentle, and the brave,
I nurtured at my side;
If envy still your bosom stings,
Take back their rims of gold;
My sons will melt their wedding rings,
And give a hundredfold!

THE TOAST. Oh, tell me, ye who thoughtless ask
Exhausted nature for a threefold task,
In wit or pathos if one share remains,
A safe investment for an ounce of brains?
Hard is the job to launch the desperate pun,
A pun-job dangerous as the Indian one.
Turned by the current of some stronger wit
Back from the object that you mean to hit,
Like the strange missile which the Australian throws,
Your verbal *boomerang* slaps you on the nose.
One vague inflection spoils the whole with doubt,
One trivial letter ruins all, left out;

A knot can choke a felon into clay,
A not will save him, spelt without the k ;
The smallest word has some unguarded spot,
And danger lurks in i without a dot.

Thus great Achilles, who had shown his zeal
In healing wounds, died of a wounded heel ;
Unhappy chief, who, when in childhood doused,
Had saved his bacon had his feet been soused !
Accursed heel that killed a hero stout !
Oh, had your mother known that you were out,
Death had not entered at the trifling part
That still defies the small chirurgeon's art
With corns and bunions,—not the glorious John
Who wrote the book we all have pondered on,—
But other bunions, bound in fleecy hose,
To " Pilgrim's Progress" unrelenting foes !

A health, unmingled with the reveller's wine,
To him whose title is indeed divine ;
Truth's sleepless watchman on her midnight tower,
Whose lamp burns brightest when the tempests lower.
Oh, who can tell with what a leaden flight
Drag the long watches of his weary night ;
While at his feet the hoarse and blinding gale
Strews the torn wreck and bursts the fragile sail,

When stars have faded, when the wave is dark,
When rocks and sands embrace the foundering bark,
And still he pleads with unavailing cry,
Behold the light, O wanderer, look or die!

A health, fair Themis! Would the enchanted vine
Wreathed its green tendrils round this cup of thine!
If Learning's radiance fill thy modern court,
Its glorious sunshine streams through Blackstone's port!
Lawyers are thirsty, and their clients too—
Witness at least, if memory serve me true,
Those old tribunals, famed for dusty suits,
Where men sought justice ere they brushed their boots;
And what can match, to solve a learned doubt,
The warmth within that comes from "cold without"?

Health to the art whose glory is to give
The crowning boon that makes it life to live.
Ask not her home;—the rock where nature flings
Her arctic lichen, last of living things,
The gardens, fragrant with the orient's balm,
From the low jasmine to the star-like palm,
Hail her as mistress o'er the distant waves,
And yield their tribute to her wandering slaves.
Wherever, moistening the ungrateful soil,
The tear of suffering tracks the path of toil,

There, in the anguish of his fevered hours,
Her gracious finger points to healing flowers;
Where the lost felon steals away to die,
Her soft hand waves before his closing eye;
Where hunted misery finds his darkest lair,
The midnight taper shows her kneeling there!

Virtue—the guide that men and nations own;
And Law—the bulwark that protects her throne;
And Health—to all its happiest charm that lends,—
These and their servants, man's untiring friends;
Pour the bright lymph that Heaven itself lets fall,—
In one fair bumper let us toast them all!

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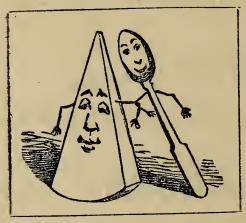
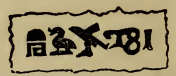


Wedge and Wooden Spoon.
See p. 272.



Egyptian Hieroglyphic verb, to be drunk, showing the amputation of a man's leg. See *under* BREAKY LEG (viz. *Strong Drink*) *in the Dictionary*, p. 81.

See TWO UPON TEN, *in the Dictionary*, p. 264.

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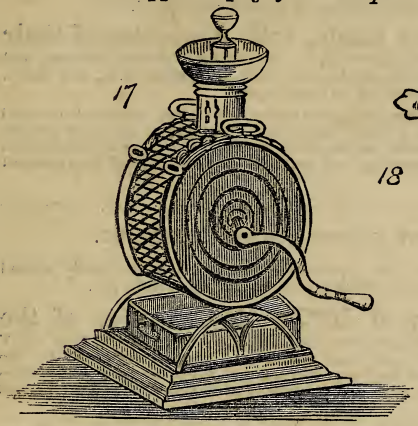

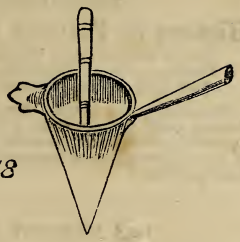

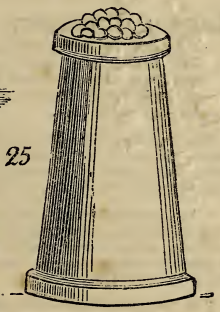

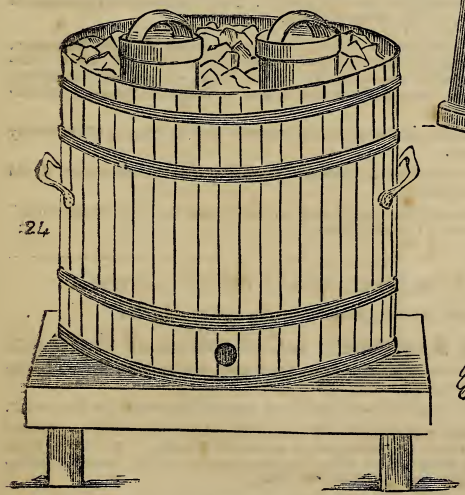

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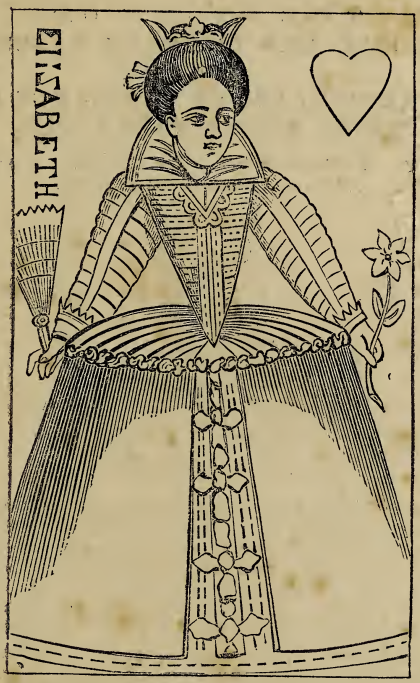

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